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AN
ANALYTICAL INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
TO
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS :

WITH
ANALYTICAL INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

BY THE
REV. W. A. O'CONNOR, B.A.
TRIN. COLL. DUBLIN :
AUTHOR OF 'A COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS' ETC.

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TO
MY TRIED AND TRUE WIFE,
THE

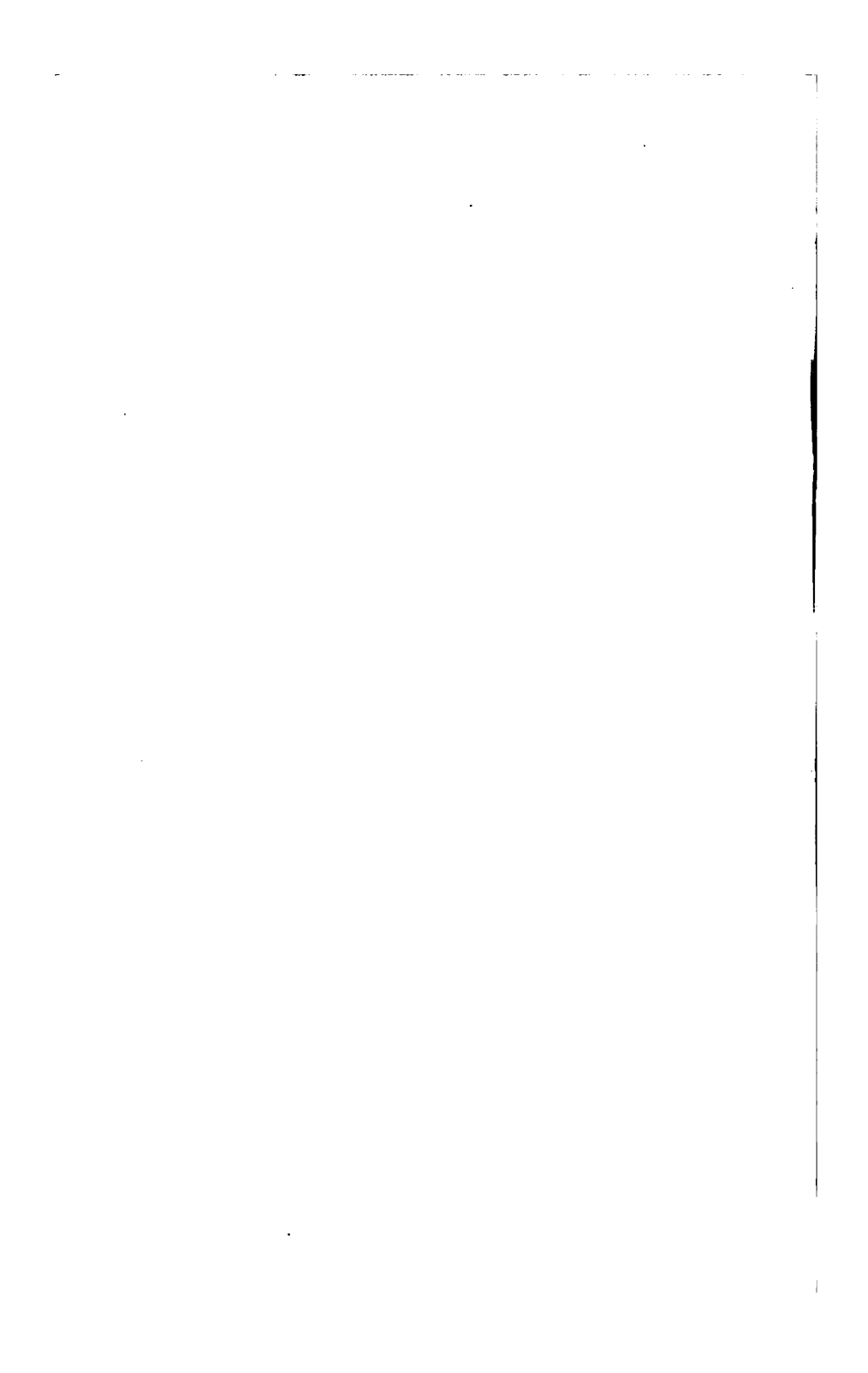
COMPANION AND HELPER OF MY STUDIES,

FOR WHOSE SAKE ONLY HAS ANY THOUGHT OF HUMAN PRAISE EVER
MINGLED WITH MY DESIRE THAT 'THE TRUTH WHICH MAKES FREE,'

DEAR TO HER AS TO HER HUSBAND,

SHOULD PROSPER ON THE EARTH,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

AMONG THE METHODS of defending Christianity against the alien spirit which is increasing around it, place may perhaps be allowed for an attempt to present it in its natural mood, in its calm unconscious strength, apart from the attitude and temper of resistance, by a dispassionate examination of some of its original records. Its real meaning and true value may come to light in this way more distinctly than in any other. These points are too often taken for granted by those who attack, as well as by those who guard, the citadel. That the latter should proceed on the assumption, that all the world knows the preciousness of the treasure whose inviolability they protect, is only what might be expected. Neither is it to be wondered at if, in the warmth of continued debate, they come at last to

suppose that they are holding a personal possession against a foreign enemy, and forget that the true, the only defence of Christianity must be made by inviting the assailant within its fortress and displaying all its hidden resources. It is possible that we may more perfectly learn how much we have to maintain by learning how to maintain it; and that the enemies of our faith may cease to attack when they become aware what it is that they are attacking. The Icelanders tell, that when the falcon has killed a ptarmigan and torn her open, he utters bitter piercing cries of distress on discovering that he has slain his own sister, whom he did not know till he had reached her heart. The friends of the doctrines of Jesus Christ might console themselves with the reflection, that in the unfettered discussion that would follow their formal overthrow, their real character would be revealed. But it is better to anticipate such a possibility by descending from the ramparts, and asking the besiegers what it is that they seek to destroy.

It is an encouragement to this mode of defence, and a proof of its soundness, that it may be con-

ducted within narrow limits, and with very moderate powers. There is no need of that large grasp with which the philosopher can bring the scattered subjects of his survey within the boundaries of a compound system; nor of the universal erudition which the accomplished scholar can concentrate on the verbal difficulties of a text; nor of the wide acquaintance with the successive phases of opinion which enables the ecclesiastical historian to elucidate the mysteries of a doctrine. The Bible has a profound truth to convey, but almost every separate portion of it contains that truth in its essential integrity. It is advanced as a presumption for the truth of the Christian religion, that it suits itself to all stages of civilisation, as the clouds that line the heavens are said to conform to all the inequalities of earth. But a far more satisfactory argument can be found in the identity of doctrine that meets us, like a universal stratum of primeval rock, wherever we dig deep enough into the sacred volume. This doctrine, founding the true principle of the progress of our race on an accurate knowledge of man's moral constitution, and invigorating both by a

method of divine assistance that remedies their failures without altering their native tendencies is in itself, without insisting on any special theory of inspiration, a solid and immovable basis on which our faith may safely lean. Whatever discoveries science may make or imagine will only consolidate this ground of our belief. Every step that is made towards establishing a lowly origin for man's physical nature will be a corresponding step towards establishing the superhuman origin of the religion of Christ.

But if this argument is to be worked out with any success, the Bible must be treated as 'a rock that follows us ;' as a fountain, not as a stream. However ancient any received interpretation may be, and however venerable the names that sanction it, there will be always so great a possibility that it was warped by the antagonism, or unduly either stunted or overgrown by the climate of its age, that it cannot claim to stand in true genetical sequence to the word of God, so as to interpose with authority between it and all future enquirers.

THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

ANALYTICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE DESIGN of the Epistle to the Hebrews was to raise the Christian religion above all the legal, ceremonial, and national associations which naturally adhered to it in the minds of Jewish converts. i. ii. 3.

The writer begins by establishing out of the Old Testament Scriptures the superiority of Christ to Angels. Christ was the Son of God, and after His incarnation ascended to the throne of universal dominion in heaven. Angels, on the other hand, as the name implies, are only subordinate ministers working for the welfare of those who are about to inherit the salvation provided by God for them. We should, consequently, give more careful heed to the Gospel preached by Christ and His apostles than to the law delivered by angels. If the two dispensations be compared with regard to the dignity of their respective ministers, the Gospel evidently demands a closer and more absorbing attention than the Law.

But does this excellence remain after Christ has dis-

appeared from earth? Is not the Gospel committed now to the agency of men, and are not angels declared to be superior to men? The Gospel, ^{ii. 3-18.} it is true, was only in its first announcement taught by Christ in person, but an important part in its promulgation has been performed by His human hearers and followers whose office in the Church was authenticated by miracles and spiritual gifts confirmatory of their divine appointment. The Christian dispensation, therefore, has been consigned to human, not angelic, administration. It is also true that man is spoken of in Scripture as lower than angels; but this inferiority is in special reference to death. All things, besides, were placed in subjection to man; death alone continued his lord and held him in degrading bondage. Now Christ made Himself liable to death, assumed this inferiority to angels, in order that He might rise through it to honour and dominion, and thus change man's lowest and bitterest badge of servitude into the possible instrument of his permanent elevation. All that was degrading in death has been removed. It need no longer be the fathomless gulf in which man's brief empire comes to a dishonoured conclusion. Christ reached perfection through death in order that man, whose inevitable lot it is to drink of the same bitter brook, might also be enabled to lift up his head thereby. All things are now in subjection to the believer in Christ. Death, the former mark of his weakness, has been made the stepping-stone to glory. Christ took our nature upon Him for this particular end. For He came to help men, not

angels, and so He took on Him the nature of men that His death might extract the sting of death, and render it no longer the penalty of sin, but the passage to a dignified and blessed immortality.

The superiority of Christ and His human ministry having been thus asserted, it is next shown that the authority of Moses is quite subordinate to that of Christ, or rather, that it has no place among Christians. Christ was faithful in the Christian Church as Moses was in the Jewish. But Christ must have more honour from the Church which He constituted and established than any other person. As the founder of His own Church, no one can compete with Him in His claims on its allegiance. Moreover, Moses was faithful *in* his church as a servant, but Christ as Son *over* His. Christ has all authority, therefore, in the Christian Church, and Moses has none. iii. 1-6.

Our continuance in a Church with an invisible Head requires constant watchfulness and faith. In this respect, however, the Christian Church is in no more unfavourable a position than the Jewish was, even when it was under the personal leadership of Moses, and had numerous visible manifestations of the divine Presence. This visible leadership, and those divine manifestations did not give exemption from vigilance, or protect from the consequences of unbelief. If, therefore, our communion with Christ depends on our perseverance unto the end, this does not distinguish us from the Church of God in former times, or place us under any disadvantage in comparison with it. iii. 6.
iv. 13.

The Jews under Moses, as we infer from the Psalm of David, failed to enter the promised land through unbelief. The inspired language which marks the sorrow and anger of God towards their backslidings in the midst of the external light that surrounded them is a warning to all ages that steadfast faith alone can bind us inseparably to God. It is, therefore, no strange or needless imposition that we should be required to hold fast our confidence. And it is only natural that faith should be equally demanded in both cases, inasmuch as the reward or rest promised to the Jews was essentially the same as that which is the object of the Christian's hope. The means of attainment are likely to be the same when the ends are identical. The promised blessing being in both cases a stage of spiritual growth, can be reached only by similar exertions. The same good news that was proclaimed to the Jews of old is proclaimed to Christians now, therefore the conditions must be the same. It is God's rest, rest after labour, an essential joy of the spirit consequent on the exercise of faith, that is offered for the acceptance of men. It is evident that rest in this spiritual sense, and not a temporal cessation of the toils of the journey from Egypt, is meant in the passage referred to, from the fact that David speaks of it as still depending, still conditional, long after the time of Joshua. We must, therefore, not depend on visible bonds of union, or personal leadership, or material offerings, but labour in sincere faith and pure devotion of soul; because the relation between God and His servants is not a ledger reckoning of formal services and

professed allegiance, but an account that includes our motives and searches into our most hidden thoughts.

Since, then, the writer resumes, we have a Great High Priest who has entered Heaven, let us be faithful to our acknowledgment of Him. We need not iv. 14. shrink from any scrutiny however searching, v. 10. since He is acquainted with our varied temptations, inasmuch as He experienced them all Himself and overcame them. Therefore He knows how to help us suitably to our wants. For the elevated nature of His priesthood did not prevent him from conforming to all the stated usages of the earthly office. He was taken from among men. He was called of God as Aaron was, although after another order. Even as the ordinary priest made special offerings for his own sins that thus he might intercede more sympathisingly for the sins of the people, so Christ when on earth offered up His tears and anguish for Himself and indirectly for us at the prospect of death, and was delivered from the dread and horror of it as the penalty of sin, thus opening a pathway through suffering to perfection for all who obey Him. The order of Melchizedec in no respect falls short of the order of Aaron.

Having proved the superiority of Christ to angels and to Moses, and shown that the priesthood of Melchizedec is as regular in its appointment and as v. 11. efficient in its qualifications as that of Aaron, vi. 20. the writer proceeds to establish the peculiar pre-eminence of the former priesthood. But he must first prepare his readers for his argument by unfolding a freer

and ampler range of thought than that to which they had been accustomed, and demanding from them a suitable keenness of spiritual and moral discernment. There are rules and signs in the early stages of every science which give no intimation of the future principles and uses to which they are nevertheless indispensable steps. There are elementary doctrines and ceremonies in Christianity whose real application remains practically unknown to us until we have grown upon them into the strength and righteousness of living faith. A just valuation, therefore, of those elementary doctrines requires of us that we advance by means of them and beyond them. We have, moreover, a most urgent personal motive to this advance. We may fall away from God if we linger too long in those early stages and elements, and, if we do, our fall is irrecoverable: whereas, if we gain the heights of intuitive truth, we cannot fall away. Our safety, therefore, lies in progress and perfection. Formally apprehended doctrines however awful, and ceremonies however sacred, may be violated and trampled on, and, if they be, with what hope can we resort to remedies that have already failed? If the power of the Cross, that was meant to carry us through self-denial into the region of perfect accord with God's law, be prostituted through self-gratification to sin, we have deprived ourselves of the means of making another beginning. The unsown seed or the mature plant will bear the frost and the heat, but if the tender seedling be blighted it can have no second birth. Our only safety is in going onward to maturity. The earth that

receives fertilising rains from heaven may either bring forth grain for the tiller or thorns and briars. The heavenly influences that fall upon us may also at a certain stage nourish either good or evil fruit from the soil of our nature. If the product be good fruit we shall have God's blessing; if bad, we shall be in danger of His curse. But the Hebrews, the writer intimates, had given proof by their works that they were aware of the purposes to which their privileges must be turned. Still, it was necessary to urge them to perseverance to the end. He shows that the promises of God are won and inherited by faith and patience. Man's abiding trust is met by fuller assurance from God. Stronger demonstrations of the divine faithfulness greet the believer on his way. Abraham believed God and was rewarded with a promise, and when he relied on the promise it was confirmed by an oath, God descending to human methods of encouragement and ratification. This same mode of confirmation has been employed in our case, who have succeeded to the spiritual unfolding of the promise made to Abraham. God has sworn to Christ that the promise made to Abraham should be fulfilled in Him, that He should be the High Priest and Saviour of the human race. Thus He has strengthened our hope by two oaths, tokens of His immutable counsel, in order that it might support us in the storms and trials of life, directing our view to heaven, whither Jesus our eternal High Priest of the Melchizedecan order has gone before us.

The excellence of the Melchizedecan priesthood is now

shown. The Old Testament record of Melchizedec, the passage where the only mention of him is made, is typical of a perpetual priesthood. vii.

Nothing is related of his ancestors, his birth, or his death. We only get a glimpse of a living personage. The brightly illuminated spot of his transmitted history, unlike all other histories, shades off into darkness on either side. The one culminating incident of his life, a precious and mysterious gem cut from the parent rock, and set in the ring of the older dispensation, serves as the signet and sign manual of God's covenanted mercy. Abraham admitted his own inferiority to Melchizedec, involving that of Levi, when he gave him tithes and received his blessing. The mere fact that another priesthood was resorted to with a necessarily altered law, proves that the first priesthood was inadequate to man's necessities and must yield to its successor. For the hope of eternal life brought in by Christ can accomplish the perfection to which the law was unequal. The superiority of Christ's priesthood may also be measured by the more solemn sanction given to it. Finally, ordinary priests die and are succeeded by others, whereas Christ always remains the same, and intercedes without break or interruption for us; and while all other priests are imperfect and encompassed with human infirmity, and so must offer sacrifices for themselves as well as for the people, the Son of God having offered Himself once for priests and people, is made perfect for ever.

The substance and practical value of what has been said is this, that we have a High Priest in viii—x. 18.

Heaven who offers the real spiritual sacrifices and gifts of which the Levitical sacrifices are emblems, according to the model shown to Moses on the Mount. The distinction between the office of Christ in Heaven and that of the ordinary priests on earth, is that between the thing typified and the type; the reality and the shadow. If Christ were on earth He would not be a priest, because the office of priests on earth is to adumbrate what He substantiates in Heaven. They show in figure what He fulfils in fact. Their sacrifices only symbolise the discharge of the penalty of sin. His priesthood now consists in the administration of the effects of his one real sacrifice, in the continual offering to God of believers who have died in His death and risen with him to righteousness. He has now obtained a more excellent ministry, in so far as he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been established on better promises. That it is a better covenant may be inferred from its having superseded the former one, which was found incapable of binding the Jewish nation to God, and securing his continued guardianship over them. The new covenant, therefore, no longer depends on external guidance or human instrumentality, but God's pardon through Christ is proclaimed directly to all, and His laws are thereby written on the hearts of men, and all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. But the very expression 'new' signifies that the other covenant is old, worn out, and ready to vanish. The first covenant, moreover, was inferior to the second in that it had ordinances and a temple of a worldly kind.

It did not make plain the way to Heaven, and its sacrifices were ineffective. There were two tabernacles with the furniture appropriate to each. Into the first of these the priests went habitually in their performance of the divine service, but the high priest alone went yearly into the second with an offering of blood for himself and the people. By this was signified that as the way into the second tabernacle lay through the first, and was not thrown open as long as the first remained, so the way into Heaven was not openly explained and proclaimed as long as the temporary, formal, and ineffectual worship of the first tabernacle continued to flourish. But Christ, passing through a spiritual tabernacle, and by means of His own death, has entered Heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the death of bulls and goats could give ceremonial cleanness to the flesh, how much more shall the death of Christ enlighten and purify the conscience? And it is on account of this efficacy in His death that Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, in order that all who enter into it by faith may die with Him in His death; and thus obtaining pardon for past sins, may rise to the life of righteousness, and receive the promise of eternal life. For this is the necessary condition of entering into covenant with God. Death is figured and implied in every such case. The death of the old man, of his former self, is typified in the death of the victim, and formally undertaken by the covenanter. There must have been something in his previous life of unjust action, false claim, or unsuccessful effort, that is atoned for, and renounced for the

future by a typical death. This accountability for past shortcoming and imperfection is recognized even in reference to sacrifice itself. The covenanter acknowledges the incompleteness of his former offerings, and makes a special offering for their inefficiency. Moses, when inaugurating his covenant, sprinkled the book, the people, and the tabernacle with blood, thereby making atonement for the deficiencies of all previous attempts at reconciliation with God. The earthly tabernacle and its utensils might be cleansed by the blood of victims, but the original heavenly system of reconciliation and pardon, the prototype and model of the sacrifices of the law, needs a better and a more comprehensive sacrifice to cleanse its imperfections, that is, the imperfections of men in their use and application of it. This is to be found in the death of Christ, containing in it the death of all believers. This is the pregnant, comprehensive, better sacrifice. For Christ has entered heaven itself, not to offer Himself often in the future, for such a supposition would imply that He must have also often died to give validity to all past sacrifices, but by one offering of Himself to put away all sin from the beginning of the world till the end of time. As we die only once, so Christ has once been offered for us ; but this one offering can enable us, if we trust in Him for salvation, to resemble Him when we see Him ; that is, to be without sin, and so to need no further sacrifice. The law cannot accomplish such a result, because giving no distinct prospect of the things typified, conveying no vivid impression of them to the soul, it lacks the power to work perfection

in those who come to it. If its sacrifices had this power, they might be discontinued. If they reached the conscience they need not be repeated. But they are repeated, because the death of bulls and goats cannot stir man's soul in its depths, and supplant the love of sin there, by the love of God's law. The repetition of those sacrifices proves their comparatively perfunctory and superficial nature. Therefore, when Christ comes into the world, he adopts the language of the Psalmist, and says in effect: 'Thou wouldest not typical sacrifices and offerings, but by preparing a human body for me Thou hast made plain Thy will to me. Then said I, Lo I come to do Thy will.' The incarnation of Christ indicated God's purpose that the one perfect consummate and effectual offering should be made, which should leave no occasion for any further sacrifice. The sacrifices of the law, then, are done away, and the doing of God's will, that is the offering of the body of Christ, substituted in their stead for ever. The will of God which Christ fulfilled was that by His one sacrifice and offering of His body, we should be finally sanctified. Therefore, we do not need the sacrifices of the law. Another comparison of Christ and the priests will show the inefficacy of their work, and the efficacy of His. They stand perpetually repeating the same sacrifices. He, having offered His one sacrifice whose power will overcome the world, has sat down at God's right hand. To guide us through this argument, we must keep in mind that the writer's aim is to prove the cessation of the sacrifices of the law, inasmuch as Christ's one

sacrifice is final and all-sufficient. It has a vital power not only to pay the penalty of sin, and so relieve the conscience ; but it operates by a law of progress upon the soul, quickening it and endowing it with the principle of infinite growth. For by *one* offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Now if one offering is sufficient to effect these results, there can be no necessity for any further priestly sacrifices. And the language of inspiration concerning the new covenant testifies to this:—I will put my laws in their hearts, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. If our sins are pardoned, and have passed from God's remembrance, why should we act as if they still remained recorded against us ? Therefore, the sacrifices of the law are passed away. Where remission of these is, there is no more sacrifice for sin.

Having established the spiritual priesthood of Christ, and the needlessness of further sacrifice, the writer urges the Hebrews to a fuller exercise of faith as the sole remaining medium through which man
x. 19.
can hold communion with his Maker. In proportion as the visible ceremony has vanished, the mental grasp on truth must increase in firmness. There is also a stronger motive than ever for the avoidance of sin, for now that sacrifices have ceased among Christians, they cannot appease the conscience and alleviate its pangs by any priestly act ; and therefore if they shut themselves out from Christ's immediate presence by wilful sin, they leave no prospect for the mind to dwell upon, save the image of an offended Judge. There was, moreover, a

change about to take place in the political world of a nature corresponding to the new revelation that had been made to mankind. As the souls of men were being roused from the half slumber of their typical intercourse with God, during which they had seen divine things only in figure and vision, so the temporal dispensation that spanned the heavens like a cloud, darkening the radiance of truth, and toning it down to the twilight of man's undeveloped faculties, was about to disappear. The true Heaven was unveiled, and the typical heaven must no longer obstruct and disappoint the newly-inspired hopes of the world. The Gentiles who look to Judea for consolation and deliverance, must not be mocked and bewildered by the sight of a temple-service that denied the advent of the Consoler and Deliverer. The whole temporal and ecclesiastical polity of the Jewish nation was about to come to a complete and sudden termination. An unwavering and intelligent trust in God, with a just comprehension of the purpose for which the family of Abraham had been originally called and planted in the land of Canaan, was the necessary preparation for the startling series of events that was soon to be unrolled. The writer addresses himself to the task, in the remainder of the Epistle, of elevating, dilating, and purifying the spiritual conceptions of his readers: and occasionally, as the mist of prejudice grows less dense, the dawn of God's spiritual kingdom in the horizon attracts the gaze from the ruined hopes that disfigure the nearer prospect. He makes known the secrets of early Jewish history by wrapping

the Patriarchs in the incandescence of their faith, so that they move like living lights amid the darkness of the past. Those pioneers of the kingdom of God were not fastened to earth by the attraction of nationality. Abraham went out from the land of his birth at the Divine command, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Those men did not claim the land of Canaan as the fulfilment of a promise to them, but held it in trust as the chosen soil that was to render in due season the vintage of truth to the Lord of Truth for the blessing of the world. They had no narrow selfish view of nation or country. Canaan did not absorb their affection, nor limit the infinite yearning of their hopes. They trod lightly on its surface. They held it in faith. They did not deem they had a country, nor did they seek an earthly city whose material splendour was to be the pride of the whole earth. If they sought a country, Abraham might have returned to the home of his ancestors. If human magnificence were the object of their search, Moses might have been as a child of Pharaoh. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare that they seek a country. The land of Canaan was won by faith, but it

was not held by faith. The writer gives no special instance of a true believer from the time when the kingdom was established. From that period there was only a commonplace nation with commonplace ends, alliances, rivalries, wars of conquest, and piles of gold, that kept the land barren of righteousness. Thus the fathers of the Jewish race held the promised land on the terms which Christianity demanded from the Jews of the present day. Let us imitate this faith, and acknowledge that we too are strangers in an alien world. We have no longer a temple or altar; but we have Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The earthly kingdom must pass away, but we have a kingdom that cannot be moved. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

CHAPTER I.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners
spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his*
Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by
whom also he made the worlds;

I. ¹ *At sundry times and in divers manners*] Multifoldly and
multiformly. Comp. Luke xxiv. 25-27.

By the prophets] In the writings of the prophets. See iv.
7; Acts xiii. 40; Rom. i. 2.

² *In these last days*, ἐν ἰσχύει τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων] At the end
of these days. At the close of the period of time that is still
unexpired. Very lately. Opposed to 'in time past.' Comp.
2 Pet. iii. 3.

By His Son] In the person of one bearing the name of son.
See Matt. x. 20; Gal. i. 16. 'Son' is a title. The argument
is founded on the difference between the names 'Son' and
'Angel.' Comp. ver. 4.

Heir of all things] Inheritance of all men. When κληρονόμος
or κληρονομεῖν governs a noun signifying persons, not things,
the meaning is that these persons shall inherit the possessions
or doctrines of him described by κληρονόμος or κληρονομεῖν.
See Rom. iv. 13; Matt. v. 5; Syr. xxii. 4; xlv. 1; Gen. xv.
3, 4; Prov. xiii. 22; Esa. xlix. 8. God appointed Christ to be
the Teacher and thereby the Ruler of the human race.

The worlds] The ages. See note on xi. 3.

3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten

³ *The brightness*] An outshine, or a radiance.

The express image of His person] An expression of His purpose or disposition. *ὑπόστασις* may always be translated 'purpose' in the N. T. See 2 Cor. ix. 4; xi. 17; ch. iii. 14; xi. 1. 'Understanding,' in the sense of general determination and settlement of character, would be the fittest and most literal rendering. The word originally meant basis or sediment, and is figuratively applied to the gist or substance of an argument, or the tendency of a disposition.

Upholding all things] Continually producing all things. See Mark iv. 8, &c. Philon. de Nom. Mut. p. 1084. c.

When He had by Himself purged our sins] Having made a purification of sins. As the sacrifices under the law cleansed the offerer legally, so that he could, with a safe conscience, present himself with the congregation before God, so the sacrifice of Christ removes the moral disqualifications that hinder us from coming into God's presence, and brings us into communion with His people.

⁴ Christ has been exalted to power beyond that of Angels in proportion to the superiority of the name assigned to Him over that assigned to them.

⁵ Some general principle must be sought which will ex-

thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

plain and comprehend the several passages quoted from the O. T. as prophecies of the Messiah. This can readily be found in the inspiration of the people of Israel to hope for and foresee a Ruler who would establish a universal prevalence of righteousness on earth. This hope was the true but often hidden life of the nation; and all the prophets directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, testified to it. Their language naturally took the colour of the existing political condition. When a prophet governed, the coming deliverer was spoken of as a prophet (Deut. xviii. 15), when kings ruled, as a king. When holy men looked into the future, their view was interrupted by some personage just rising in the horizon, and the description meant for the Messiah was accommodated to him, making him a sign of the postponed expectation. The writers of the N. T. merely opened a way for the lines of prophecy to flow on to their right destination. All predictions of coming glory, however originally ascribed, were utterances of the prophetic hope with which the national heart was full.

For unto which &c.] The first quotation is from Ps. ii., of which David is the subject. The same passage is cited by St. Paul, Acts xiii. 33, as prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus. The second quotation is from 2 Kings vii. 14, and relates originally to Solomon. They are employed here to prove that Son in a high official signification is the proper title of the Messiah.

* *And again when he bringeth &c.* When in addition to the

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

title Son, He is prophetically introduced as first begotten. Ps. lxxxviii. 27.

Let all the angels of God worship Him. This phrase which occurs verbatim in Deut. xxxii. 43, and in sense in Ps. xcvi. 7, is perhaps a popular equivalent for 'Superior to all the Kings of the earth;' Ps. lxxxviii. 27. The important word is *ὑπερέτατος*, which is equivalent to *πρῶτος*, the point of the writer's argument. The expression, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him,' is substituted for 'Superior to all the Kings of the earth,' in order to bring 'first begotten' and 'angels' into immediate contrast.

7 *Who maketh His angels &c]* Who represents or treats His angels as if they were winds, and his officers as if they were a flame of fire. The name angel carries with it the idea of subordinate and mechanical duty. Ps. ciii. 4.

8 *But unto the Son he saith]* But concerning the Son, &c. It is evident from the meaning of these words that whatever may have been their first application, they were intended to describe the human history of the Messiah, and the character of His kingdom. His human nature, because of its attained moral perfection, was raised to the throne of universal dominion and made susceptible of happiness greater than that enjoyed by men. The quotation is from Ps. xlv. 6, 7.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

¹⁰⁻¹² Ps. ci. 25-27. The Jews were familiar with the thought that the Messiah was the architect of the heaven and the earth (see ver. 2), and Jesus was acknowledged to be the Messiah by those to whom the epistle is addressed. The writer's object, it should be remembered, was not to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, which was admitted; but to remind the Hebrews of His consequent superiority to angels.

¹³ Ps. cix. 1. The reign of Christ was established for the subjugation of all evil, and it will continue till that object is consummated. 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

¹⁴ *Ministering spirits*] Ministering winds. The office of angels has been compared by God to that of the winds. They may be called winds, being sent, as the name implies, to perform a merely ministerial work.

For them] On account of those. The persons for whom angels are to minister are assumed to be heirs of salvation,

CHAPTER II.

THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

on grounds independent of the angelic ministry, which is therefore confined to temporal services. See note on ii. 9.

Who shall be heirs of salvation] All future servants of Christ. See 1 Tim. i. 16; 2 Pet. ii. 6. Salvation is moral safety, which is secured by a process of belief in, and imitation of, Christ.

II. ¹ *Therefore*] The obvious inference from this superiority of Jesus to angels is, that we should pay earnest heed to His doctrines.

Lest we should let them slip] Lest we should be flown or passed by, as by a river, by them. Let us be borne on by the force and volume, the rush and the torrent of fundamental truths; lest they pass us by, and we be left half-stranded in the languor and stagnation, or mere reflux and eddies that remain when the mighty tide has rolled on.

^{2, 3} The dispensation given through angels threatened punishment for any violation of the law. It is possible to

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?

escape punishment. But Christ offers salvation, and there is manifestly no escape for those who refuse it, because salvation is itself permanent security from evil. God need not inflict punishment upon the guilty, but He cannot confer salvation on those who do not strive for it.

Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord] It might be objected that the Gospel was preached not by Jesus but by men. To this it is replied, that it was first preached by Jesus, and was then confirmed and continued by divinely commissioned men who had received the tidings from His lips.

⁴ *God bearing them witness*] God bearing joint testimony with them. The Gospel after Christ's death was not left altogether in human hands. God assisted its ministers by demonstrations of power that came immediately from His own will.

⁵ God gave the sanction of His miraculous power to men, for not unto angels, &c.

The world to come] The future period of this world's history. Not the future life, nor what remains to run of this life together with the future life. Either of these would be expressed by αἰών. οἰκουμένη never has any such meaning. It is called future, because it has not yet fully come. The dawn only has appeared. See x. 25.

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels ; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands :

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

⁶⁻⁸ *But one in a certain place testified]* An objection that may be raised to the quotation of Ps. viii. 4-6 is anticipated. But, an opponent is supposed to say, if an inspired passage declaring the subjection of all things to men be advanced, it cannot be appropriate to the present time. For when it is said that all things are made subject to man, there is no exception left. But we do not yet see, in fact, that all things are subject to him. That which we do not see subject is death. That is the mark of man's inferior condition.

⁹ *But we see Jesus]* The reply is that Jesus descended to the human level in order that He might die for all men, and thus liberate them from their last remaining master and tyrant, and reduce him to subjection under them.

Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death] We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour by means of the suffering of death. *διὰ* governing an acc. denotes a cause on account of which, or a means through the co-operation of which with the primary agent, something is done ; never a strictly final cause.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

It always implies that the subject which it governs (unless, perhaps, in the case of *διό* and *διὰ τοῦτο*), is already in existence. *διὰ παθήματός* would not necessarily express the idea of the text, because it might only mean that Jesus was raised to glory and honour by the mere unconnected fact of dying; whereas the sentiment conveyed is, that he was raised by means of the assimilated process of suffering. In this way salvation is reached, and so Jesus is called the Captain or Leader of our salvation. A man may be carried to the top of a mountain *by* another man, but he attains the glow and the glory of the elevation *by means of* the toils and perils of the ascent. Or fire may be lighted *by* a person, but it is lighted *by means of* firewood, which forms part of it. See John vi. 57; xv. 3; Rom. iii. 25; viii. 10; Gal. iv. 13, &c.

That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man] Death was made the means of His exaltation in order that since all men must suffer and die, they also may be exalted. By making death a stepping-stone to honour, Jesus tasted death for every man, for every man may follow in His steps.

¹⁰ *For it became &c.*] It was in keeping with the wisdom and mercy of the universal Father, in accomplishing the work of redemption, to subject the Redeemer Himself to that same process which, in the case of all men, was inevitable. Suffering was the indispensable stage through which man should pass, and it was consonant with God's character to submit Himself to it. Man could not rise through suffering without the reconciling death of Christ; but that is not the idea presented here, but

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

the goodness of God, who sent Christ to undergo the whole experience by which salvation is to be gained by us.

For whom are all things and by whom are all things] On account of whose previous existence and by whose agency. If God had not been, nothing would be. If God had not created, nothing else would be. Such is the Being on whom all things are dependent, and who is dependent on nothing that is created, who has assumed humanity with all its sorrows.

¹¹ *For]* The divine condescension had been referred to as worthy of God's character : the specific act of the incarnation explains the allusion. It was Godlike to descend to the depth of our human needs, for He did this by taking our nature upon Him.

Of one] Christ ranked Himself amongst men as a descendant of Adam.

¹² Ps. xxi. 22.

¹³ Esa. viii. 17, 18. The two quotations indicate the human brotherhood of Christ. The first represents Him as looking up to God from the same level as His human brethren. The second classifies Him with the other children of God, who were called His children only as descended from Adam, and so makes Him their Brother.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

¹⁴ *That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death]* That by death He might destroy him who has the strength of death. When death was appointed as the penalty of transgression it also became the possible escape from the corrupted carnal nature to a pure spiritual life. It was punitive and recuperative. In the former character it was Satan's work, and was surrounded with enslaving terrors: in the latter it was God's provision, and was lighted by immortal hopes. Christ, by dying, has exhausted the punitive character of death, and it now remains to all who have become identified by faith with the death of Christ only in its peaceful and beneficent character as the stage and passage to heavenly glory. By effacing the violent and destructive aspect of death Christ has neutralised the terror and reversed the victory of the Tempter.

¹⁵ By thus extracting the sting of death, Christ has delivered mankind from the mysterious and degrading dread of it. Comp. v. 7.

¹⁶ *For verily]* The subject may well be conversant with death and the fear of death, for it was not angels but dying men whom Christ came to assist. All things are thus put under men: the one particular in which they were below angels now raises them above them. See ver. 9.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertain- ing* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

He took not on Him the nature of angels &c.] He does not take hold of angels, but He takes hold of the seed of Abraham. *ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι* means to take by the hand in order to support and assist. See Matt. xiv. 31; Mark viii. 23, &c. The Hebrew race, the family of Abraham, was, as it were, the hand of humankind which Jesus grasped. Through them we are all lifted from the yawning gulf of death. God chose Abraham to be the ancestor of the Messiah, with the view of thereby exalting mankind to immortality.

¹⁷ *Wherefore*] Since Christ undertook the liberation of His human brothers from death, it was incumbent on Him to be made like them in all respects, even in their liability to death, in order that He might become a compassionate and faithful High Priest towards God to cancel the sins of the people. Death is the critical point in human history, where the power of Christ and the power of Satan meet. Christ became a man capable of dying, that as a High Priest before God He might offer His death as the penalty of sin for all men, thus destroying Satan's work, and removing that aspect of death which hid the lineaments of the divine character from man's view.

To make reconciliation] To discharge the penalty of the sins of, &c. The penalty of sin is death. The Jewish priest symbolised the payment of the penalty by the offering of blood. Blood was accepted instead of the life. 'The life of the flesh is the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make a settlement (*ἐξιλάσκεσθαι*) for your lives; for it is the blood that makes a settlement (*ἐξιλάσεται*) instead of the life.' Lev. xvii. 11; comp. 2 Par. xxix. 24. *ἰλάσκεσθαι* (elsewhere

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

CHAPTER III.

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus ;

followed by a dat. of sin or sinner in the sense of pardoning : comp. Luke xviii. 13), has here a construction of the compound verb, which is found in Dan. and the Apocrypha. Dan. ix. 24 ; Syr. iii. 3, 30 ; v. 6 ; xx. 28, &c. The usual expression in Lev. and Numb. is ἐξιλάσκεισθαι περὶ, to offer satisfaction, or make a settlement, on behalf of.

¹⁸ *For in that &c.*] For in what He suffered when tried in that He is able to assist those who are tried. The trial in which Christ especially suffered was death, and He can assist all men in that inevitable experience, because by His death He took away from it all that made it dreadful—that dark and threatening aspect of it which hangs like a cloud between us and heaven. The effect of Satan's successful temptation of man was that death misrepresented God as angry and vengeful. Christ baffled Satan, and assisted man by removing the misrepresentation, and revealing God in His unaltered and unalterable benignity and mercy.

III. ¹ Since the kingdom of God is subjected to Christ, the Hebrews are exhorted to fix their regards on Him who is at once the prophet and priest, the proclaimer of the doctrine and the offerer of the sacrifice of their profession.

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things is God.

5 And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confi-

² Numb. xii. 7.

³ Christ's superiority to Moses is another reason for attending to Him.

Hath more honour than the house] Hath more honour from the house or household. Christ is more worthy of glory than Moses, in proportion as he who built the house has more honour from it than another has. It was Christ, not Moses, who founded the Christian Church, therefore we should look up to Him, not to Moses.

⁴ The builder or founder must have more honour than another, because there is a necessary relation between the founder and the family. Houses do not arise spontaneously, but are dependent on those who establish them. Such is the force of this principle, that by virtue of it He who built all things is thereby constituted God.

⁶ The superiority of Christ to Moses being settled, a difference between the Jewish and Christian Churches that seems

dence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart ; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

to tell to the disadvantage of the latter is introduced. The Jews claimed God's favour inalienably as children of Abraham. The Christian holds his place in Christ's household conditionally.

⁷ This conditional membership is shewn to have also existed in the house of Moses. The writer does not state this directly, but implies it by the quotation which he makes. Christians cannot be in a more unfavourable condition than the Jews were in, inasmuch as exhortations to perseverance required by the circumstances of the Christian, may be borrowed verbatim from language addressed to the Jew.

Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith] Wherefore, since our membership is qualified with an 'if,' we may be addressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, spoken to the Jews of old. The words of the Psalmist are addressed directly to the Hebrews. The quotation is from Ps. xciv. 7-11.

¹¹ *They shall not enter]* If they shall enter—the literal rendering is more suitable to the purpose of the quotation.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

^{12 13} The writer warns the Hebrews that they must not trust to God's irreversible favour. Unbelief will separate them from the fountain of life. They must guard against the hardening influences of sin by mutual exhortations, and the use of present opportunities.

¹⁴ We must take heed because our participation in Christ's death depends on our steadfastness.

¹⁵ *While it is said*] By its being said. The particular purpose of the quotation is manifested here. The language and principle of conditional church membership are introduced from the Jewish into the Christian Church. That we are partakers of Christ only if we hold fast the freedom of our hope, is implied by its being said, even by the Psalmist, that the efficacy of the words depends on the susceptibility and retentiveness of the heart.

¹⁶ The facts of the case lead to the same conclusion. All the Jews were in covenant with God; yet some of them provoked him.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

CHAPTER IV.

LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

¹⁷ With whom was He grieved, was it with persons not included in His covenant? No; but with persons who were in it, and who violated it.

¹⁸ To whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest? Was it to the Gentiles? No; but to Jewish unbelievers.

¹⁹ And we see from the actual history that unbelief was the cause of failure. Fact verifies our inferences.

IV. It is further shewn, that the warning drawn from Jewish failure is applicable to the circumstances of Christians, since the rest to which the Jews were called was the same as that which is now promised to Christians.

¹ Let us not be vainly confident in some mistaken estimate of God's character, but with the view of Jewish failure before us, and having a promise of entering into rest, as they had, let us fear lest we fall short of it, as some of them did.

Should seem] The rest which the unbelieving Jews who

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

died in the wilderness actually fell short of, was the possession and enjoyment of the land of Canaan. In failing to attain that, they were seen apparently to fail in attaining the eternal peace of heaven. It could be said of them (iii. 19), 'we see that they could not enter in.' The writer admonishes the Hebrews of his own day, not so to resist God's later revelation concerning the mode of admission to and continuance in His kingdom, as to let it appear to the future church that they fell short of the spiritual blessing. The Jews in Moses' time appeared to reject heaven by rejecting the land of Canaan. The Jews in Christ's time appeared to reject heaven by clinging too closely to the land of Canaan. There was an obviously similar want of faith in both cases. Failing to see the spiritual nature of the promise was openly falling short of it.

² For we have had good news proclaimed to us as they had; rest has been offered to us as it was to them. But they lacked faith wherewith to respond to the offer.

³ The only difference that can exist is in the mode of receiving the good news. The rest is the same. They lost it through unbelief. We shall obtain it if we believe.

As he said, as I have sworn &c.] The object is to prove that the rest offered to the Jews in the time of Moses was virtually the same as that offered to the world by Christ. The language of the Psalm, already quoted, implies this. It

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief :

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

describes the rest to which the Jews were invited as God's rest. But God's rest cannot be restricted to the temporal possession of Canaan, for it dates from the creation of the world. Evidently God's rest must be understood in a very comprehensive spiritual sense.

^{4 5} A comparison of Gen. ii. 3 and Ps. xciv. 11 explains what the Psalmist meant by rest. He did not limit it to a peaceful enjoyment of the promised land, but alluded to the rest into which God entered after He made the world.

^{6 7} Since some are still to enter in, and unbelief excluded those to whom the good news was first proclaimed, God, speaking in the Psalms of David, fixes another day and warns against unbelief.

After so long a time] The time when David wrote was long after the time of Joshua. Since David speaks of the day of entering into rest as still existing in his own time, it is manifest that the rest which Joshua had to give did not exhaust or fully explain the meaning of the term.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

pith. The whole description intimates that God does not keep a register of dead sacrifices, but of the movements of the living soul.

¹³ *Naked and opened*] Unmasked, and facing or confronting the eyes of Him with whom is our reckoning. *τραχηλίζειν* has the meaning of turning the neck, so that the face can see, or be seen. We ever keep our true countenances under God's gaze, turn from it as we may. See Plut. De Curios. iii. 389 (Tauchn.).

¹⁴ Since we are exposed to this searching examination we need a High Priest of more than human purity and knowledge to mediate with God for us. What can an ordinary priest do on our behalf, when the motives and aims of his most solemn acts of intercession are themselves an object of scrutiny? But we have a great High Priest who sits on the throne of God. Therefore let us be steadfast in our faith.

Passed into the heaven] Passed through the heaven. Acts i. 9.

Profession] Consent. Joint avowal or engagement.

¹⁵ The heavenly Priest can also feel more compassion for us

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

CHAPTER V.

FOR every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins :

than an earthly one is capable of. The words 'without sin' do not simply convey an exception to the statement of Christ's temptations, or a modification of it, but express an integral part of the reason which is assigned for His being able to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Christ can feel for us not only because He Himself was tempted, but because He was tempted without sin. Sinners are not lenient to sinners. The Jewish priest would naturally fail to shew consideration for the sins of the people in proportion as he had sinned himself. Unrepented sin kills charity.

¹⁶ A provision being thus made for our weaknesses and shortcomings, let us accept the pity and help which we need, and not depend on the fallacious exactness of our legal performances.

Boldly] With free access.

V. Christ is compared with the Aaronic priests (1-10), and it is shewn that whatever claims on our confidence they may have because of special fitness and appointment, He has the same.

^{1, 2} The ordinary high priest when he mediates between God and man can proportion his declaration of the divine displeasure towards human sin from a sense of his own infirmity.

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Have compassion] Moderate his anger.

³ *And by reason hereof]* And on account of this infirmity, for the sake of it, as that which supplies a motive for forming a true estimate of God's feelings towards the sinner, to preserve the consciousness of it fresh and present in his mind, it is one of the duties of his office to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for those of the people. The public admission of his sinfulness would tend to prevent priestly arrogance and injustice. Comp. Matt. xxiii. 1-4; and the parable of the unforgiving servant, Matt. xviii. 23. This offering on account of infirmity is one particular in which Christ is compared with the ordinary high priests.

⁴ The second is, that the Aaronic high priest does not appoint himself, but is called to his office by God.

^{5, 6} It is shewn in the inverse order so common in this epistle and in others of St. Paul, that Christ conformed to those two conditions. Firstly, he was appointed by God. The passages quoted are Ps. ii. 7 and cix. 4.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ;

7 Secondly, He offered up prayers and tears and cries of distress to God at the prospect of death, thus pledging His sympathy for ever to the race of men in their last dread struggle. It was as a preparation for His more faithful discharge of the priestly function that Jesus acknowledged His human weakness by praying that the cup might pass from Him, and by uttering the exclamation of mental horror and spiritual desertion on the cross.

Unto Him that was able to save Him from death] This was the character of omnipotence in which God appeared to Christ when he explored the depths of anguish, and spoke aloud in its tones and accents, giving utterance to the natural cries wrung from Him by agony, that He might readily recognise and interpret them when ascending from earth in all future times. God is mightier than the terror that haunts us, than the cloud which hides Him, than the trial and temptation through which we are about to pass, than the death we must endure. This is implied even in the wild and aimless groanings of the soul. It is natural to pray for deliverance from temptation and death. Christ has taught us to do the one, and has done the other for us. To feel that God can deliver us from death is enough to reconcile us to death if we trust in Him. Before there can be any force in the words, 'Not my will but Thine be done,' there must be the belief that He can cause the cup to pass from us if He will ; and the supplication, 'Let this cup pass from me,' describes only the instinctive reluctance of man's will that is quelled by God's spirit into resignation to His will. Christ felt and acknowledged all this human weakness in order to

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him ;

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

deal tenderly with the ignorant, and them that are out of the way.

And was heard in that he feared] And having been delivered from His religious fear. See Job xxxv. 12; Syr. xli. 3. The fear of Christ was the holy loathing of a sinless soul at death as the shadow and penalty of sin. He was saved from this fear, so that He persevered and finished the work He came to do.

⁸ In passing through these dark and bitter experiences He learned by actual sufferings what that obedience is which is demanded from man; how arduous it is, and what degree of consideration should be meted out to the involuntary resistances, writhings, and struggles that deform its progress.

⁹ *And being made perfect]* The event, the Resurrection, which marks a stage in the process of perfection is not to be confounded with or strictly reckoned among the steps whereby that process advances. Christ was not made perfect by being translated to heaven, but when made perfect through sufferings He was translated thither. Comp. Luke xiii. 32; ch. ii. 10; vii. 28; xii. 23; and See Philon. de Somniis, p. 585, c.

¹⁰ The whole preceding passage treats only of some minor correspondences between the Aaronic priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, shewing the regularity and completeness of the latter; but the essential difference and superiority of the priesthood of Christ is always assumed by the terms in which it is described. He was a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

¹¹ *We have many things to say and hard to be uttered*] The meaning of the English text is, 'We have many and hard things to say.'

Seeing ye are dull of hearing] On men of quick spiritual intelligence, the title 'High Priest after the order of Melchisedec' would by itself pour a whole volume of illumination; but because the Hebrews were slow to comprehend the subject, the explanation must be long and difficult. When a figurative or historical allusion fails to flash instantaneous light on the mind, there is always inherent obscurity in the details.

¹² Considering the time during which they had been Christians, they ought to be teachers, but instead of that they needed some one to teach them the first principles of Christianity again.

And are become such as have need of milk] Their spiritual appetite had remained stationary, so that they still craved for children's food. They had not advanced beyond symbols, and doctrines that were symbolic, to the solid practical maxims and principles so symbolised. Faith in God's eternal judgment is worthless unless it leads to virtuous action, as knowledge of the alphabet is useless unless we advance to intelligent reading.

¹³ Milk, or children's food, represents the elements of Christi-

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

CHAPTER VI.

THEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

anity. Solid food stands for the word of righteousness. He who can satisfy the wants of his soul on rudimentary doctrines will not hunger and thirst for righteousness. He knows little or nothing of it. For he is only a child in his tastes and aspirations.

¹⁴ But great primary laws and principles belong to ripened souls whose faculties are habitually conversant in discerning good and evil. By the practical application of elementary doctrines to moral purposes, we arrive, by spiritual induction, at the eternal and unchangeable laws of righteousness. We learn to know Christ more perfectly.

VI. The writer's object is to lead the Hebrews onward from the associations of Jewish formalism into a region of unencumbered spirituality. He disarms prejudice by making Christian formalism, which was in reality a relic of Jewish, the point of departure. What he requires is not that elementary doctrines should be changed or wholly abandoned, but that, by the church's constant progress in the direction to which they point,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

they should be true indications of a living belief, and not inert professions of a stagnant orthodoxy. Doctrines and fixed creeds are like weather vanes. They shew how the current of faith and opinion runs. But the wind may die away, and the arrow still remain pointing to the distant heavens, witnessing to a dead though not changed or perverted faith.

¹ *Perfection*] Maturity, salvation, intuitive righteousness.

Repentance from dead works] I.e. merely retrospective.

² *Baptisms*] Washings; a word is used that will apply to Jewish or Christian practices.

³ *The world to come*] See note on xi. 3.

⁴ The reason why it is necessary to go on continually to perfection is, that if we lose our vitality and fall into sin, which is always possible, unless we are making progress, we not only renew our want of a Redeemer, but we openly shew that His redemption has been already in vain. The impossibility of repenting afresh in such a case is not an arbitrary or an absolute impossibility, but an impossibility for which reason is as-

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God :

signed, the force of which is to be estimated according to circumstances.

If they shall fall away] παραπίπτειν never refers to formal apostasy. Comp. παράπτωμα.

Crucify to themselves afresh] According to the analogy of ἀναχωρεῖν, ἀνακαλύπτειν &c. ἀνασταυροῦν might mean to re-crucify, that is, to uncrucify, a sense which is necessarily involved in the idea of crucifying afresh ; ἐαυτοῖς would then have a definite meaning : seeing that they undo the crucifixion of the Son of God so far as themselves are concerned. The word is not thus used in classical Greek, it is true ; but then it is always applied in classical Greek to persons who were to undergo crucifixion ; whereas, here, it refers for the first and only time to One who had already been crucified. It does not occur in the LXX., nor again in the N. T.

⁷ An illustration is given very similar in construction to the Parable of the Sower, and carrying the same lesson. The chief difference is, that, in the Parable of the Sower, the truth proclaimed, or the seed, is that on which the stress is laid ; but here the fertilising influence that accompanies the truth is the point on which the comparison rests. The light of truth and the warmth of the Spirit and the power of eternity on the soul of man, are like rain on the earth. *They* do not form the character or shape the destiny, just as the rain does not determine what the produce of the earth will be. If men do not use the strength which these forces give to the soul for God's glory and man's good, sin will spring up and flourish, and what is then left to root it out ?

By whom it is dressed] On account of whom it also is tilled.

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

Land watered from the heaven, and moreover cultivated, if it bears fruit fit for those, &c.

Receiveth blessing] Is set apart as fruit-bearing land, and increases in fertility and profitableness.

⁸ *Whose end is to be burned*] Whose end is to supply fuel for burning. See Esa. xl. 16; xlv. 15. The line of thought that runs throughout is directed against the essentially Jewish error of imagining that the possession of divine truth or favour confers security and fulfils God's purpose. We must not deceive ourselves by relying on the soundness of our foundation, or the copiousness of the potential activities and energies of truth. The foundation is of no use till it is hidden by the superstructure. Our spiritual advantages are worthless to have and insecure to keep till they are absorbed into living habits and principles of virtue. The foundation is made secure by every stone we lay upon it. The *στοιχεῖα* are preserved by merging them in use. Our knowledge of the alphabet is best retained by advancing to the perfect use of the language. The seed is preserved by producing the crop. The noble act, the boldly spoken truth, are the real perpetuators and faithful guardians of the simplest doctrines of Christianity, and the steps that lead to the highest. If we are not faithful to truth in this way, we shall lose it, and our worthless sinful lives and deeds will be only the firewood with which other men's virtues are purified, and made available for the good of the world.

⁹ The writer would not have spoken of the impossibility of

10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end :

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

recovery from a state of deliberately chosen sin to the Hebrews had he supposed them to be in such a state.

Things that accompany salvation] The signs and accessories of the growth to perfection.

¹⁰ Our entire dependence upon God for the recognition of our faint attempts at goodness, and at the same time the principle of equity or fairness which enters into every divine relation with man, are both implied here. God blesses the fruitful soil, and perpetuates its fruitfulness, rewarding the earth perennially with the solace of the leaf and the pride of the blossom, for the wise distribution of its juices. So will He honour the deed of love, strengthening its roots in the soul, and causing its bough to flourish with more abundant fruit.

¹¹ *And we desire &c.*] But we desire that on your side, answering to God's blessing, there may continue the same hope-strengthening diligence. The more they laboured for others, the more would their faith and hope, *i.e.* their essential salvation, increase.

¹² The end of God's promises in the order of Providence is to call forth those qualities of faith which, when acquired,

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

constitute the spiritual sensorium wherewith at last the majesty of supreme justice shall be seen. Faith in the promise will one day fit us for its complete fulfilment; but now we cannot tell what it is. The thing promised could not be described to us because we have no sense to discern it: but the promise—the pledged word or oath—if we receive it by faith and do not look for an immediate and gross realisation, will clear and enlarge our vision, and then the reward will be seen to lie in the far eternity; but meantime the new insight will be a sufficient present fulfilment. Thus it was with the fathers of the Hebrew race. The heir-loom entrusted to them by God lighted up their souls, and descended from father and son in the light it created. The effect it produced, the disposition it built up, was its first fulfilment. To accept the office of transmitting it was to enter into God's plan; to pass it on in its pure spiritual meaning was to make it one's own. This was the sense in which the patriarchs inherited the promises. They accepted and transmitted them in faith and patience, and, in this spirit, their descendants are exhorted to receive them.

13-15 It is by faith and patience, not by sight and touch and objective ownership, that the promises are inherited. When God made the original promise to Abraham, confirming it by an oath, it was the display of these qualities that obtained it. 'It is by endurance that the promises are inherited, for it was by endurance that Abraham obtained the promise on the occa-

16 For men verily swear by the greater ; and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath :

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it* was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us :

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul,

sion when God, having no greater thing to swear by, swore by Himself that He would bless and multiply him.'

Obtained] Had promises made to them. See xi. 33.

¹⁶ Men for instance (the general meaning of *μὲν γὰρ*) swear by a greater, and an oath is to them an end of all opposition for confirming. It was in condescension to human habits that God swore and swore by Himself.

¹⁷ 'In which mode of confirmation God abundantly desiring to shew to the heirs of the promise—as He had to the first obtainer of it—the unchangeableness of His counsel, interposed with an oath'—*i.e.* to Christ. Ps. cx. 4. Christ as High Priest is Mediator between God and man, but in making the appointment to the priesthood God necessarily mediated between Christ and man.

¹⁸ In order that by two unchangeable things, the oath made to Abraham that Christ should come of his seed, and the oath made to Christ that His priesthood should last for ever, we might have strong encouragement who have fled from the world to cling to the hope set before us, who have resigned ownership for heirship.

¹⁹ A complex idea is expressed by a complex figure. Sure

both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil ;

and steady progress is analysed into progress and steadfastness, and the first is represented by a race or flight, the second by the mooring of a ship.

Which entereth] An anchor is meant only for occasional use. When the storm threatens, the anchor is cast out. Our hope is finally and objectively a heavenly one. But it is not always consciously so. We do or strive to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. We realise a present kingdom of heaven. Our hope then becomes interested in the immediate present. We look for quick returns. The anchor is on deck. Our hope is something visible. But we cannot quite make a heaven here. The very conduct that we thought would bring rest and reward raises opposition, persecution—a storm. Then we cast out our anchor. That is, we remember that our hope is in a future heaven. Whenever we, as occasion requires, call this to mind, the anchor enters within the veil. 'Entereth' does not mean that the hope has entered heaven once for all, and remains there ; but that from time to time, as circumstances require, it enters in. Comp. ver. 7. Whenever we recall that heaven is our true abiding final hope, our anchor is said to fix itself there.

Into that within the veil] We cannot too soon or too much, if we would understand this epistle, familiarise ourselves with the fact that the localities, instruments, and practices of the Jewish ritual express spiritual relations. We must not seek local and material counterparts. Divine laws and processes are expressed to us in the technical terms which describe the forms and appliances of Jewish worship. We lose the true meaning of the later revelation if we insist on the literal interpretation of those terms. There is a local heaven ; but redemption is essentially concerned not with it, but with reconciliation of mind between God and us, between heaven

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

and earth. Our hope enters into that within the veil when it passes from the visible to the invisible, from the material to the immaterial, from the temporal to the eternal. We inherit for the increase of our faith and for onward transmission the promise made with an oath to Abraham, and confirmed with an oath to Christ, of a kingdom of heaven. We believe in the omnipotence of God and His righteousness. We believe that the highest blessedness is inseparably attached to holiness. This is our hope. It is natural and inevitable that we should expect an earthly fulfilment of this hope. But we are too often disappointed. Then we recollect that we have only a promise for the aggrandisement, not the gratification, of our faith and hope, a promise that is to pass on through the ages, ripening the souls of men for its final fulfilment in heaven. Then we are no longer disappointed. We know that our hope grows here, but has not its fruit here. When the earthly hope fails, we are anxious, shaken, tossed: but when we recollect that the end hoped for is really in the invisible world, it acts as an anchor does for a tempest-driven vessel. The remembrance that hope is fulfilled in heaven, and only there; or, to use a figure drawn from the ceremonies of the Temple, the entrance of our hope within the veil, keeps us fixed and steadfast under trials, as an anchor keeps a ship unmovable in a storm.

²⁰ *Whither the forerunner*] Jesus has gone before us into the world of spirits to prepare for us. There is no need to interpret the going before of Jesus by comparison with any primary meaning which *πρόδρομος* may have had. He has gone before us on our behalf.

Made an High Priest] The earthly high priests represented in emblem on earth what Christ was to do in Heaven, Christ

CHAPTER VII.

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him ;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all ; first being by interpretation King of righteous-

is a high priest in the sense that the Jewish high priesthood was instituted to represent, in visible type and figure, the spiritual function which He eternally discharges in the spiritual and unseen world. The title High Priest as applied to Christ is taken from the Aaronic office ; but it denotes something different from and superior to it, as may be seen by an examination of the passage in Genesis concerning Melchisedec, to whose order of priesthood Christ is said to belong.

VII. Christ having been compared to Melchisedec, the brief passage that relates to the latter is thereby invested with a prophetic fulness of meaning. The supernatural character of Christ's person and history grows more and more discernible in it while the comparison proceeds, until Melchisedec disappears and Christ only is seen, as the sun's reflected beams are extinguished in the effulgence of his primary light.

¹ *For*] Connects and explains. Christ is said to be made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, because Melchisedec, being without any genealogy, and no mention being made of the beginning or the ending of his priesthood, remains a priest continually. His individuality fills the history of his order. It is evident that the eternal heavenly priesthood of Christ could have been figured on earth only in this way.

² *First being by interpretation king of righteousness*] When we see a meaning applicable to Christ extracted from the

ness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace ;

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but made like unto the Son of God ; abideth a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham :

names of Melchisedec and Salem, we have a key to the whole rendering of the passage.

³ *Without father &c. but made like unto the Son of God*] The obvious meaning is, not described as having parents, and a line of ancestors, and as having been born, and having died, but described so as to resemble the Son of God. It may be remarked that the title Son of God as here used, cannot be applied to Jesus in consequence of His human birth, for in such relation He had a genealogy. The titles of Son and High Priest were officially assigned on His resurrection.

⁴ The payment of tithes by Abraham to Melchisedec, like the paying of tribute, is taken as an undoubted acknowledgment of inferiority. What follows is an enlargement and specification of this idea.

⁵ This inferiority of the payer to the receiver of tithes is

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

not quite apparent in the Jewish Church, because it is by virtue of their descent from Levi, and by legal enactment, that the Aaronic priests receive tithes from the people, although all are descended from a common forefather Abraham. The payment is made not because of inferiority but notwithstanding equality. It is made on grounds which do not affect the comparative stations of the parties concerned, viz. the legal appointment of a particular tribe to the priesthood.

⁶ But the generally implied superiority of him to whom tithes are paid is manifest in the case of Melchisedec because he had no tribal claims or immunities. The payment of tithes to him by Abraham is explicable only on the ground of Abraham's admitted inferiority. He who was superior to the Patriarch who had the promises must have been very great.

From them] He who is not said to be descended from any ancestors, to whom no genealogy is assigned. *αὐτός* is frequently used in this indefinite sense. Matt. vii. 29; Luke v. 17, 30; xviii. 7; Acts iv. 5; xx. 2, &c. Comp. Aristot. Ethic. i. 3.

⁸ The priestly order of Melchisedec was never transmitted, nor did it lapse by death. The record which contains its whole history, and on which it is formally founded, testifies only to a living part enacted.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

¹¹ With respect to tithes it is seen that, in a variety of ways, the order of Melchisedec is superior to that of Aaron. But, moreover, the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec is implied in the fact, that it has superseded that of Aaron: for, if the priesthood of Aaron could have made men perfect, there would have been no necessity for a change.

For under it the people received the law] For on its basis, ἐν αὐτῇ, the people received the law. The law of sacrifices was the active medium whereby the principle of the priesthood worked on the moral nature of the people. Moral and spiritual amelioration was the purpose of the law. But the law was the expression of the principle of the priesthood. Therefore, the amelioration of man's moral nature was the purpose of the Aaronic priesthood. The Aaronic priesthood, therefore, is to be judged by its success in this direction. But the fact of its having to give way to another priesthood is proof of its failure.

¹² The priesthood and the law must stand or fall together, the law being the voice and arm of the priesthood for the regeneration of man. When, therefore, the priesthood is

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

changed, it must be for the purpose of changing the law. The Aaronic priesthood could not make the people perfect by means of the law. Therefore it must be changed. But if it is changed because of the inadequacy of its law, the law also necessarily must be changed with it.

¹³ That the priesthood with the law in its sacrificial aspect has been radically changed is manifest from the fact, that Jesus, to whom the Melchisedecan priesthood has been assigned, did not belong to the tribe of Levi, but to another of which no member ministered at the altar. The altar which represented the law of sacrifice has no place in the priesthood of Jesus.

¹⁴ For evidently our Lord was of the tribe of Judah, a tribe unconnected with the priesthood.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ That our Lord was of a non-priestly and non-sacrificing tribe is manifest from the silence of Moses, but still more manifest from the affirmation of the Psalmist, who speaks of a different order of priesthood, that of Melchisedec.

¹⁶ *Not after the law of a carnal commandment]* Not accord-

17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest*:

21 (For those priests were made without an oath;

ing to the rule of a command that aims only at exterior sanctity—at the ceremonial cleansing of the flesh (see ix. 13), and affects only the temporal or ecclesiastical position of the individual, but, according to the influences, motives, and activities of eternal life. (See vi. 5.)

^{18, 19} That it is a different order of priesthood is evident from the results. For instance there is an abrogation of the preceding law of sacrifices (ver. 16), on account of its inefficiency, for the law made nothing perfect; and there is the introduction of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God.

²⁰⁻²² A third argument is adduced for the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus. The first was founded on the payment of tithes to Melchisedec, the second in the greater efficiency of the new priesthood, the third on its being founded by God with an oath.

²⁰ In as far as not without an oath, so far was He made surety for a better covenant. The sense must be completed from ver. 22.

²¹ *For those priests*] 'The priests, for example, are made

but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.

24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

without an oath, but He with one.' A comparison between the two modes of appointment shews the superiority of the appointment of Jesus.

^{23, 24} As another proof of the excellency of Christ's priesthood, the idea of ver. 8 is varied from living and dying to changing and unchanging. The Aaronic priests are many in succession. He is one without succession.

²⁵ There is no break or interruption in the progress of our sanctification so far as Christ is concerned.

²⁶ A general contrast between the Heavenly Priest and the priests of the later Jewish history seems to be intended here. He is holy, not capable of harming anyone, without any stain

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

of sin, not mixed by the force of social or political currents with worldly-minded or secular persons, not enjoying an empty worldly rank that too often inflated its bearer with pride, but raised above all earthly distinctions. Such a priest is suited to our human wants.

²⁷ 'Who has not need (to offer Himself) daily, as the high priests have to offer sacrifices (yearly) first for their own sins and then for those of the people; for He did this, made an offering for priests and people, having offered Himself once for all.' οὐκ ἔχει καθ' ἡμέραν must apply to Christ only; for it does not apply to the high priests (see ix. 7). πάντα then being opposed to καθ' ἡμέραν must be taken with ἀνεπίστατος. On the construction, comp. 20-22, and on the meaning, see ix. 25, 26. The offering of Himself is essentially different from the offering mentioned v. 7, which was only a memorial offering for His human liability to temptation while on earth.

²⁸ The law appoints men not holy, harmless, undefiled, &c., but always retaining their infirmity: but the word of the oath appoints Him styled Son made perfect for ever. Both Son and High Priest evidently apply here to the ascended Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum : We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices ; wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

VIII. ^{1, 2} The sum and substance of the argument is, that we have a High Priest in heaven and not on earth, a High Priest of such a kind as this that He ministers in no temple made with hands. See 1 Cor. v. 1. Christ is called a High Priest in the same sense as that in which heaven is called a sanctuary and a tabernacle.

Of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle &c.] Of the true original, opposed to typical, sanctuary and tabernacle. See ix. 1, 24.

³ The reason is given why Christ is called a Minister and a High Priest. His office as Mediator and Saviour was typically represented by the acts of the Jewish priests. They did symbolically what he does in fact and reality. They offer gifts and sacrifices, therefore He too must have an offering to make, and so is to be denominated a High Priest. When we have viewed the shadow we look to the object that cast it, expecting to find a similar shape. The Jewish priests offer gifts and sacrifices ; therefore He, of whom they are adumbrations, must

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law :

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle : for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a

make offerings. They are priests ; therefore, since they represent Him, He may be called a priest.

Have somewhat to offer] Should have in continuance what He once offered.

^{4. 5} He must have an offering to make, because there are priests on earth showing forth and promising this concerning Him. Their part is to exhibit in figure, His to perform in fact. Those two offices are separate in place. One cannot possibly be involved in the other. Christ's offering is not and cannot be effectively comprehended in the priest's offering. He must have an offering of his own to make, distinctive, peculiar, characteristic. As an illustration or instance of this distinction, if Christ were on earth, He would cease to be a Priest, because the priest's office is to symbolise, and His is to fulfil ; and the symbolisation is on earth, while the fulfilment is in heaven. The death of believers by sin effected by the death of Christ on the cross is Christ's offering to eternal righteousness. Christ paid the penalty of sin once for all on earth. He offers us perfected through the offering of Himself in heaven. See ix. 12, 14, 23, 24, 26, 28 ; x. 5, 10, 14, 22.

⁶ He has a more excellent ministry than earthly priests, that

better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah :

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt ; because

of offering redeemed souls (ix. 23), in accordance with the nature of the better covenant of which He is Mediator (ix. 15).

Now] Since His ascension. He now administers the privileges obtained by his death.

⁷ That the covenant of which He is Mediator is a better one may be gathered from the faultiness of the preceding one; for if the preceding one had been without fault, it would not have been displaced to make room for the second. *τόπος* has a meaning verging on 'occasion,' or 'necessity.' If the first covenant were faultless, there would be no need of a second. See Rom. xv. 23; Apocal. xii. 8, and ch. xii. 17.

⁸ But that it was not faultless is evident, for finding fault he saith &c.

Finding fault with them.] The fault of the covenant was not in itself but in those who could not remain in it. *αἰρώς* is indefinite. Those under the covenant; those worthy of blame. See note on vii. 6.

^{9, 10} What is called a covenant is not strictly such, but rather a dispensing with all formal and external engagements. God's

they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people :

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

promise is that there shall be a gradual growth of man's moral faculty until its voice is distinct and independent, and its light clear and unreflected. A time will come when it shall be no longer a question whether morality is intuitive and immutable. The warmth of Christianity is slowly bringing to view the deeply inscribed but hidden divine lineaments of the human soul. This stage in man's history is attained by reconciliation to God through pardon offered in Christ.

¹¹ If God no longer teaches his people by external ordinances, but, by a nearer manifestation of Himself, awakens in man's conscience those dormant laws and principles which are the expression of his will, if he allows no intermediate institution of His own to stand between the Sanctifier and the sanctified, much less shall the enlightenment of the race be for ever modified and conditioned by any contrivances of human devising. There will be a period when true religion shall be liberated from fashions of thought and conditions of history on which it has been so long dependent ; when it shall be no longer coloured or limited by its associations with nation or class. All men shall know God directly.

His neighbour] πολίτην. His fellow-citizen.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

CHAPTER IX.

THEN verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the sanctuary.

¹² This knowledge will be communicated by the revelation of God's unconditional mercy. The death of Christ has made God immediately accessible to all alike.

¹³ When a new covenant is spoken of, it is implied that the other is old, obsolete, vanishing.

IX. The writer continues to shew the excellency of the ministry of Christ by exhibiting still further the superiority of the new covenant.

¹ Moreover the first covenant had worldly ordinances and a worldly sanctuary or temple: services and a sanctuary of a material and temporal kind.

² There was an ante-tabernacle, which is called the Holy.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all ;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant ;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat ; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of *God*.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people :

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way

³ And after the second veil the tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, *i.e.* the holiest.

⁴ The writer is alluding to the ceremonies observed in the sacred services rather than to the local situation of the utensils. During the solemn act of the priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies the censer appertained to the latter place.

⁵ Those localities and solemnities, connected in the Hebrew mind with the strongest emotions of religious awe and national pride, seem to be introduced for the purpose of merely enumerating them, and then passing from them as not requiring a more lengthened notice.

⁶⁻⁸ The formal rule, according to which the priests go into

into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing :

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience ;

10 Which *stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on *them* until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ;

the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God, and only the High Priest into the second, typifies the truth which the writer chiefly notices. The second tabernacle represented heaven, and the fact that the high priest alone, after passing through the first tabernacle, could enter it once a year, signified that heaven was not thrown open, the way to it was not made manifest, while the first tabernacle remained standing. The first tabernacle, representing the way into heaven, stood for the whole Jewish system of worship. Comp. 9, 10.

* The first tabernacle figuratively represented a temporary system of divine service, which consisted in sacrifices that did not touch the conscience, and ordinances that only affected the flesh, reaching only to meats and drinks and washings.

In which] According to which figure, κατὰ ἤν.

¹⁰ *The time of reformation*] Rectification. The time of the kingdom of God. See Matt. xix. 28 ; Acts iii. 21.

^{11, 12} But Christ having come, a High Priest of future bless-

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

ings (not of a service only for the present time, ver. 9), blessings that bring faith and hope into exercise, using a mightier temple which the hand of man never wrought, and by means of His own death, not that of goats or calves, has entered once for all into heaven. What is the greater tabernacle through which Christ has passed? The heaven which He has entered is not merely a local heaven, but moreover a level of attainment, a stage of personal spiritual perfection. It is obvious that the 'way,' or tabernacle, through which this condition has been reached is not an interval in space or duration. It must be a living progress. The end of a journey is arrived at, not by a road, but by motion on a road. Moral elevation is gained not by a law or principle, but by living and progressing according to a law or principle. When we say that God is not truly worshipped in a temple, or by a ceremonial, we imply that He is worshipped without those things, or any material thing corresponding to them; that He is worshipped in spirit, and by the life and conduct. The first tabernacle (6), standing for the whole sacrificial system (9, 10), was the way into the Holy of Holies. But this system of sacrifices and ordinances could not make the worshipper perfect, and served only for present needs. Christ entered heaven, represented by the Holy of Holies, through His life of sinless obedience and suffering, represented by the sacrificial system of the first tabernacle.

¹² Blood is the symbol of death. Christ entered heaven, not as the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies through the first tabernacle, and by means of the death of goats and calves, but by His own life and His own death. Thus the way into heaven is made manifest by the fulfilment of that which the sacrifices of the first tabernacle represented, which tabernacle need no longer remain standing now that its meaning has

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh :

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?

been fulfilled. We cannot enter heaven by a mere passage through space or time, or by the performance of a ceremony. We can only enter it through the life and death of Christ. He is the way and the life and the truth. The high priest carries the blood or death of the victims, representing the death of the offerers, into the Holy of Holies. Christ carried once His own blood or death, not merely symbolising, but comprehending, realising, and accomplishing the death of those who believe in Him and offer Him into heaven. Thus it is that Christ has perpetually to offer that which He once offered (viii. 3). The true death of the believer, that is, his death as the penalty of sin, takes place in and by the death of Christ on the cross. He lives that death ever after. All that is mean, selfish, base, cowardly, and false is perpetually dying from him, until his spirit, ripened and purified, has no further change to undergo, save severance from the conquered body. Thus Christ found eternal redemption for us.

^{13, 14} For why should He not have found it ? If the blood or death of bulls and goats can confer a ceremonial sanctification, how much more shall the death of Christ cleanse and regenerate the conscience ? The Jew, who felt that he was by some ecclesiastical law debarred from the society of his fellows, and from presenting himself before God in public worship because of ceremonial uncleanness, felt inwardly degraded, and not merely legally incapacitated, but essentially unworthy and unfit to come into God's presence as a wor-

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

shipper. But the moment the purificatory rite was performed, he felt himself restored to all the privileges of one of God's chosen people. His confidence and self-respect were regained, and he went boldly before the altar. If the death of a goat or sheep produced this marvellous change, shall not the death of Christ enable us to feel that the internal uncleanness is removed, and that our sins being pardoned, we may give ourselves to the service of God? If a man could identify himself with the death of an ordinary victim, and rise therefrom to a new life in matters ceremonial and ecclesiastical, shall not we be able to identify ourselves with the death of Christ, and rise to the new spiritual life whose end is perfection?

¹⁴ *Through the eternal Spirit offered Himself*] In ver. 11 Christ is said to have entered heaven through a greater tabernacle than the material or local one through which the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. That more perfect mode of entrance was a sinless and perfect life. He reached the spiritual heaven by a perfect life of obedience, bearing His own death as an offering. When He is said to have offered Himself through the Holy Spirit, another phase of the same idea is expressed. The Spirit is the divine element through which a sinless life is lived. To enter heaven by means of a perfect life and to enter heaven by means of the Spirit, are one and the same thing. See John iv. 21, 23; and comp. Rev. xxi. 22.

Dead works] The works that die with Christ's death. vi. 1.

¹⁵ *And for this cause*] On account of this efficacy of His death He is the Mediator of a new covenant.

That by means of death] That the death of believers having

16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead : otherwise it *is* of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

been included in the death of Christ unto deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant, they which are called &c. The death of Christ has a power that enables all who believe in it to wield it as a weapon for the cutting off of their own sins. Those sins under the first covenant could be only ceremonially cleansed, and this cleansing could only obtain a temporal and ecclesiastical status ; but the deliverance which Christ effects obtains an eternal inheritance. The deliverance from the burthen of past sins committed under the law, the pardon of them, loosens the clasp and the coil of all sin. See Rom. iii. 25.

¹⁶ For where there is a covenant with God old or new, the death of the covenanter is necessarily brought in. It was said in the preceding verse that Christ was made the Mediator of a new covenant because*of the comprehensiveness of His death. His death contained in it the death of all who enter into the covenant. It is now shewn that this is a valid and appropriate reason for His appointment. The death of those who enter into the covenant is always supposed.

¹⁷ For a covenant has its force and permanency in the case of those who die according to its stipulations, since it has no validity while the covenanter remains alive. Any covenant whatever implies some concession or admission of untenability, which is so far a violence done to a previously asserted right or practice or possession, or a death of it. In covenants with God the point on which the whole validity rests is that the covenanter dies with the victim. If he continues just as he was before, the contract is null and void. It was the sinner that entered

18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

the covenant, and unless the sinner dies, that is, unless the stipulated terms are fulfilled, the covenant is of no avail.

¹⁸ Let us follow the line of thought from ver. 15. Christ is made the Mediator of the new covenant, because of the universal efficacy of His death, which reaches backwards so as to cover even the deficiencies of the first covenant, so that those called in all ages may receive the promise. The death of Christ atones for all those who really die with Him. If they believe so that their death with Him is a death of sin in them, in their degree, their shortcomings and inevitable failures are atoned for in His death. They are justified by faith. The death of Christ includes the death of the believer, and the death of the believer is accomplished and supplemented by the death of Christ. This death of the covenanter enters into the idea of every covenant with God, and without it the covenant has no force. There has always been a death by sin, and a death of sin in every covenant, to be finally completed and ratified by the death of Christ. Wherefore even the first covenant was not renewed without blood of retrospective value.

¹⁹⁻²¹ The worship of God by sacrifice had existed before Moses, and the inauguration of his covenant took note of its failures, or the failures of true believers under it. People, book, tabernacle, vessels, &c. paid the penalty of death by blood for past transgressions, as well as undertook the death of sin in the future. For blood, the symbol of death, is thereby the symbol of a re-

20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23 *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

newed and purified life ; of a life from which the impure and the mortal has died, and only the righteous and the immortal remains. This is the resurrection from the dead which commences when we die with Christ, which the death of Christ always accompanies, making it effective, and supplying its ineffectiveness.

23 Without death there is no remission. Without payment of the penalty of death the sin remains.

23 It was therefore necessary that the whole system of legal sacrifice should itself be purified, its failures and deficiencies specially redeemed or atoned for, by the blood of bulls and goats ; but that the heavenly originals, of which the temple service was the copy, should be purified by better sacrifices. Moses made atonement for the failures of past sacrifice when he formulated the covenant. The high priest did the same annually. Lev. xvi. 16. Christ atones for the insufficiency of the sacrifice under the law by His own sacrifice, including in it all others past and future.

The heavenly things themselves] These were the archetypal

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us :

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others ;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the representation of the scheme of salvation as embodied in the teaching of the old covenant. It is said to be purified because it is made as if accountable for the shortcomings or imperfections of its earthly copy. And the imperfections of the earthly copy mean the failures and imperfections of worshippers who sacrificed and served God under its guidance. See viii. 2-8. The purification of the heavenly things, then, means the completing the incomplete offerings of unbelievers in all times and dispensations.

Better sacrifices] Souls that died with Christ, who paid the penalty of sin in His death, and whose sins died from them by the efficacy of that death.

²⁴ Those are the sacrifices of the new covenant. We have ceased from all legal offerings because Christ has gone into heaven, not into the material Holy of Holies.

²⁵ It might be erroneously inferred from the universal influence ascribed to the death of Christ, that He must offer himself for and with each individual soul. The retrospective tendency of the offering of the high priest was carried out by repeated yearly entrances into the Holy of Holies with blood that was not his own. So it might be thought the comprehensive nature of Christ's sacrifice would require perpetual repetition.

²⁶ But this cannot be so because it would be thereby implied

foundation of the world : but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment :

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

that He had been making repeated offerings of Himself, suffering again and again from the beginning : which of course we know not to have been the case. The obvious fact that He did not die before proves that He need not die again. But now once in the summing up of all the ages, at a period when all times, past and future, are brought to a focus, and the deficiencies of them all supplied, He has been manifested to put away sin by His one all-sufficing sacrifice of Himself. The aim of the writer is to shew that the death of Christ is a finished act not repeatable. It is sufficient for all time. See Rev. xiii. 8.

^{27, 28} The fact that Christ died once to abolish sin is now applied to the circumstances of man. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, once only, judgment finally following on that one death, so Christ having been once offered so as to bear the sins of many, shall be seen by them again without sin ; that is, they without sin shall see Him again. They shall be free from sin, and not need a second offering. One death of man and one offering of Christ are the points compared. The judgment is mentioned only to shew the finality of death. Man dies and is judged, is equivalent to man dies only once. The second appearance of Christ is introduced to state that those who see Him will not need another sacrifice, inasmuch as they shall be free from sin

CHAPTER X.

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

through the power of the first sacrifice. Christ died for all, and as many as died with him and seek earnestly to see Him receive pardon, and are without sin, absolutely with regard to its guilt, comparatively with regard to its practice. They are sinless in proportion as they receive Christ, and they receive Him in proportion as they are sinless.

Shall he appear without sin] 'Shall be seen without sin by those that seek Him' comes nearer to the original. Those that see him shall be without sin. *χωρίς ἀμαρτίας* belongs in sense not to *ὁφθῆσθαι*, but to *τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεδεχομένοις*. See x. 28, and comp. xii. 14.

X. The law can accomplish nothing like this, because presenting no clear view of the glories that brighten the future, opening no long vista for the mind to stretch its gaze upon, it cannot awaken faith, and so achieve perfection. Its sacrifices by their frequency shut out the distant prospect. When one was performed, the next was the remotest object in the horizon. It drew men's attention rather to the shadow that lay at their feet than to the rising star which caused that shadow to be visible. It dwelt continuously on their sins, and never gave them time to conceive of a futurity when sin should be no more. It fed their lips with repeated draughts, and gave no distinct presage or hope of a period when they should never thirst.

¹ *A shadow and not the very image*] Imposing rites and

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year.

4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he

solemnities may encourage a vague and stagnant feeling of awe; it requires a clear, simple detail of the generous unselfish deed to implant a kindred principle in the mind, and train it to virtue. Perfection must be worked out in the mental and moral, not emotional or imaginative, regions of the soul.

^{2, 3} If legal sacrifices could purify the conscience, a time must come in the history of each worshipper when they should cease. Their object and meaning is to typify by the death of a victim the payment of the penalty of sin, and the dying of sin in consequence from the life. But if the discharge of the debt were valid and efficient why should it be repeated? Man dies but once; he has but one life of his own to render for his sin; when he renders this typically no more remains for him to offer. But in fact it appears that the sacrifice of the law does not constitute such a discharge of man's debt to justice as affects his conscience. He goes on year after year at the same level, repeating the same act, shewing that his conscience has not been touched, and that his sin remains.

⁴ The reason of this lies in the inherent incompetency of the death of bulls and goats to remove sin in its punishment and in its power.

⁵ On account of this inability of legal sacrifices Christ came

saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me :

6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

into the world proclaiming the substance of the words of the Psalmist, xxxix. 6-8. 'Sacrifices thou wouldest not, but thou hast made plain to me the meaning of sacrifices. Thou hast opened the ears of my understanding. Thou hast given me a body capable of perfect obedience.' The power of a sinless life explained the meaning of sacrifice, a meaning which it was unable itself to explain or to inspire. Sacrifices of bulls and goats shadowed a death by sin and of sin, but could neither convey this meaning distinctly, nor help men to attain it. Christ's body attained it, and helps others to attain it.

A body hast thou prepared me] This is the translation of the words which the LXX. give for a Hebrew expression signifying 'mine ears hast Thou opened.' The Greek is the meaning instead of the verbal rendering of the Hebrew. Giving Christ a body was the same thing as opening His ears or instructing Him how to fulfil the spirit of prophecy. The actual conferring of the knowledge or power is substituted for the verbal commission. Opening the ears is a similar expression to opening the eyes, or enlightening. See Esa. xlviii. 8; 1. 5.

6. 7 The same idea is more fully unfolded. 'Thou wouldest not sacrifice, but Thou hast prepared for me a body capable of doing Thy will, thus manifesting to me what sacrifices only dimly reveal. In offerings Thou hast no pleasure; then I said, I come to do Thy will, knowing that it is the thing represented by the sacrifice, and not the sacrifice itself, that Thou desirest.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

^{8, 9} A comparison of vers. 6 and 7 shews that sacrifices are abolished, and the thing they prefigured, the body of Christ, or doing the will of God, established in their stead.

¹⁰ The will of God which Christ came to accomplish was, that believers should be made perfect through the one offering of his body: that they should die with Him, He dying by and for their sins, and they dying in His death from the power of sin.

¹¹ *Which can never take away sin*] Can never strip off sin. Sacrifices aimed at taking off sin as a garment. They were an external remedy applied to an external symptom, and not able to remove even that.

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15 *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

¹³ The description is borrowed from that of an earthly conqueror. It must be understood in its figurative and proverbial sense. By carrying the associations of the triumph of the strong over the weak too literally to the triumph of good over evil, we incur the expression with an appearance of needless insult. But to make his enemies His footstool means only that Christ's reign, the reign of eternal justice, shall be established on the rectification of all wrong.

¹⁴ Christ is in an attitude of inactivity as regards sacrifice. The priests stand ministering daily. Christ has sat down and waits for His one sacrifice to regenerate mankind. His sacrifice affords the germ of life and strength, which grows through sanctification to perfection.

¹⁵ The writer proceeds to prove that the one sacrifice of Christ is sufficient. The inspired word of God bears witness to it.

¹⁶ ¹⁷ God, when speaking of the later covenant according to which His law would be written in men's hearts, describes the

18 Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

process by which that inscription should be effected, namely by pardoning their sins and injustices.

¹⁸ But where there is pardon of sins there need be no more sacrifice or offering for sin. The very nature of the Christian dispensation is inconsistent with the idea of continued or repeated sacrifices. The object of worship by sacrifice, it is assumed, is man's salvation (comp. ver. 2); when this is fully provided for, that is, when God's law is written on man's soul, by one all-potent sacrifice, there cannot be any further need of sacrifice. The Fall covered the divine principles of man's nature with ruins. Pride, hatred, envy, passion, grow in the rank compost of accumulated ancestral and personal sin. By the death of Christ the roots of sin are loosened and withered in its subtlest interweavings with our thoughts. The whole past is potentially blotted out. Our nature is restored to its pristine image, but with motives more cogent than Adam ever knew. The old characters are revealed in a clearer light. Thus forgiveness of sins is equivalent to writing the law on our hearts, and this forgiveness is obtained by Christ's paying the penalty of sin by His one sacrifice.

¹⁹ The writer now exhorts the Hebrews to use those glorious privileges which Christ has won for them, and in doing so still furthers his object, and enforces his argument by employing the language of the temple in its spiritual meanings. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies by means of blood. We can enter heaven by means of the blood, that is, the death, of Christ. He died for us and we died in Him. So the way to heaven is open.

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ;

21 And *having* an high priest over the house of God ;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

²⁰ The way into heaven is a regenerated life after death with Christ. A new life is a new and living way. Christ has renewed or inaugurated this for us through the veil ; that is, His flesh. He is said to have entered heaven through a greater and more perfect tabernacle (ix. 11). Here He is said to have entered through His flesh ; or to have prepared a way for us through His flesh, which implies that He Himself in His humanity first trod that way. The sense in both cases is the same. Christ enters heaven through a holy life, and in the light and power of that life we may enter with Him. If we die in His death we live in His life.

²¹ Having a spiritual High Priest over the spiritual house of God.

²² *A true heart*] True is opposed not to false or untrue, but to figurative or emblematic. Let us dispense with rite or form in our approach to God.

Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water] The allusion is to the sprinkling with blood and washing with water which were frequent in the service of the temple. The meaning is, having our consciences relieved from condemnation, and our lives cleansed from sin. The sprinkling and washing typified the discharge

23 Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works :

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is* ; but exhorting *one another* : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

of the debt of sin by the death of Christ, and the purity of life that followed. See vi. 1, 2. This spiritual application of ceremonial terms serves at once to interpret the ceremony, and thereby to account for its cessation.

²³ The repeated exhortation to hold their profession of faith fast is in proportion to the loosing and surrendering of the visible bonds by which they were held. The growth to perfection is neither mechanical nor spontaneous. The mind and heart and conscience must imbibe and absorb the nutriment of gospel truth. We must eat and drink Christ. We must partake of His death and life, eat His flesh and drink His blood.

²⁴ Neither is the strengthening of internal principles to be relied on as ensuring righteous action. Love and good works are to be designedly studied and cultured.

Consider one another] Comp. 2 Cor. x. 12.

²⁵ The writer is arguing against reliance on stated forms. But they must not go too far in this direction, so far as some were already going, who neglected even the opportunities of mutual edification and exhortation afforded by meetings for public worship.

The day] Light. The time of enlightenment and knowledge, of universal illumination. Comp. viii. 11. The day

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of [the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses :

of judgment is always expressed by *ἡ ἡμέρα κρίσεως*, *ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη*, *ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου*. *ἡ ἡμέρα*, absolutely, means the day-time of knowledge as opposed to the night of ignorance. See John ix. 4; Rom. xiii. 12; 1 Cor. iii. 13; 1 Thes. v. 8; 2 Pet. i. 19. The Hebrews must see, even from the nature of this epistle, that a clearer light of knowledge was dawning on the world. See ver. 32.

²⁶ This verse confirms the interpretation just given. They were to persevere in good works, and lose no occasion of mutual encouragement in proportion as they saw a clearer light surrounding them; for if they sin willingly after they have received the knowledge of truth, there remains no further sacrifice. The rise of a spiritual religion and the cessation of sacrifice were two sides of one truth. To sin in the light or with knowledge of the truth, was to sin with the prospect of an accusing and unrelievable conscience.

²⁷ *Fiery indignation*] Emulation of fire. Wilful sin might formerly have been committed still with the hope of giving peace to the conscience by the sacrifices of the law. Now if we sin wilfully, so far as further sacrifice is concerned, there will remain only a fearful interpretation of judgment and a vivid apprehension, rivaling the reality, of the burning remorse that shall consume those who resist God.

²⁸ Sacrifices did not avail him who rejected the law of

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Moses. There were degrees of transgression that incurred inevitable death.

²⁹ He deserves still greater punishment who has violated the far more solemn obligations which the Christian religion imposes, who has insulted not Moses but the Son of God, has slighted the blood of Christ as if it were the blood of an ordinary victim, and despised not law but mercy.

³⁰ Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.

³¹ This is the view of God's character presented not to the sinner, but to persons who, from former legal associations, were in danger of sinning deliberately with the intention of expiating their sin by future sacrifice. The writer is guarding against the importation into the Gospel dispensation of the view of sin which had prevailed under the law. Whether there is pardon for a Christian who sins *as such* is not the question discussed in this and similar passages in this epistle; but whether a Jew should be permitted to retain his habitual views of sin in connection with the repetition of offerings after he has entered a covenant which recognises only one sacrifice.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

³² Salvation and security are in action. He recalls them from abstract speculations about doctrines to the warfare they had formerly begun with such good hope of victory. Every step they had gained was a reason for going on.

³⁶ *Ye might receive the promise*] κομιζεσθαι τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν means to obtain the thing promised. See xi. 39. Comp. xi. 19.

³⁷ The title of the Coming One is applied to Christ first in reference to His coming in the flesh, and then to any signal manifestation of the law of His kingdom of righteousness. The destruction of Jerusalem was the next great event in the series.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

CHAPTER XI.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The writer refrains from a clear statement of his meaning. He does not tell the Hebrews that their city, in which they took so much pride, was about to be destroyed. He only intimates that an event was soon to take place which would finally and decisively extinguish the lingering sympathy of the Hebrew Christians with their former worship.

³⁸ He prepares them for what is to come to pass, and for the sudden and total change which their views must undergo, by appealing to their faith, and shewing the views and expectations which their forefathers entertained concerning God's promises. Faith must be their protection against every danger, their preparation for whatever may happen. Nothing will keep them firm and resigned but faith. It is by his faith that the righteous man lives; if he withdraws from his faith, God has no pleasure in him. Hab. ii. 4.

³⁹ But we are not of withdrawal unto destruction, but of faith unto the completion of the soul.

XI. ¹ And faith is the determination of things hoped for. We are not of back-shrinking (*ὑποστολή*) but of faith, and faith is the settled purpose (*ὑπόστασις*) to gain the objects of hope,

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

and the persuasion of things not seen. We have here, not a definition of faith, nor an explanation of its essence, but a description of its lofty attitude and its practical character. It is the determination to obtain and achieve—a prepossession of the mind by some distant and unseen object of its preference. It is *not* a grasping at the immediate and the material.

² We might know that it relates to the distant and unseen because it was through it that the elders of our race, who had only promises, obtained their fame. Through faith they live in history and the memory of men.

³ By faith we perceive unto the non-arising of the seen from the apparent, that the ages were fashioned by the word of God. Our belief that God made the universe carries us on to comprehend that it was a true creation, and not a formation of the world, as we see it, from visible and material elements. There is an unseen agency at work in the production of things. Faith tells us that this unseen agency is the active will or word of God. Around and under existence lies a void. Faith fills that void with God. All research of science ends at an abyss. Faith instead of an abyss finds God. We find a law of growth. Faith calls that law the law of God. The world did not frame itself spontaneously, nor did life evolve by spontaneous or natural development.

The worlds] The ages. *αἰών* means this life or the next (Matt. xii. 32; Heb. vi. 5), or, in St. John's Gospel and Epistles, both in one unbroken continuation. In the other books of the N. T. this life and the coming life, when considered continuously, are expressed by *αἰῶνες*, *αἰῶνες* and *αἰῶνες*.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should

αἰώνων are also used in reference to God's works and dispensations, and in ascriptions of praise to Him. So we say 'for ever and ever.' In reality no more than two *αἰῶνες*, this life and the future life, time and eternity, are ever imagined in the N. T. In one passage *αἰών* means the spirit or temper of this world (Eph. ii. 2), a sense in which we sometimes use the word 'age.' The word strictly denotes duration (Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30); but twice (Heb. i. 2 and xi. 3) it connotes the things of which duration is the attribute. *αἰών* and *αἰῶνες* should always be translated 'age' and 'ages' respectively.

4 By faith Abel offered a greater, more comprehensive sacrifice than that of Cain. The offering of Cain was a covenant without the idea being comprehended in it of the death of the covenanter. See ix. 16. The sacrifice of Abel symbolised his death for sin, and the death of sin in him in consequence.

By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts] By this sacrifice he obtained testimony to his righteousness (his faith, as manifested in it, being ascribed to him as righteousness), because God by Moses established a system of sacrifice similar to his, thus testifying to its excellence.

And by it he being dead yet speaketh] The sacrifices of the Temple, which were still in existence when the epistle was written, were founded on the model of Abel's offering. They were memorials of his faith, standing monuments of the correctness of his worship. In them he still survived and spoke. See xii. 24.

^{5, 6} The holiness and righteousness of Enoch's character

not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him : for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him* : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ; by the which he condemned

exempted him from death, and fitted him immediately for heaven ; but his faith was the ultimate instrument of his fitness. How do we know that it was his faith that caused his translation ? Because it is recorded that he pleased God in his conduct and life, and it is impossible to do this without faith. There is no line of conduct which could please God unless it proceeded from faith. This reason for asserting that he had faith is stated in another form. He would not have walked with God if he had not faith. When we see a man walk with God we infer that he must have faith. He who comes to God must necessarily have believed first that there is a God and that He rewards those who seek Him. There is no doctrinal statement here to the effect that, previously to coming to God, we must have faith in Him as a rewarder of those who seek him—that a man cannot be a Christian unless he has a definite expectation of a reward from God. There is only a logical inference from the fact of a man's having sought God and obeyed His laws, that he must have believed in Him and regarded His favour as the reward of time and eternity. This is the persuasion of things not seen.

⁷ *Not seen as yet*] Without parallel or precedent. Noah

the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

believed that an event antecedently incredible was about to come to pass.

Moved with fear] Not fear of the deluge, but of neglecting the divine warning.

By which He condemned the world] By the preservation of himself and his house he shewed that the condemnation of the world was just, that its destruction was not arbitrary or inevitable, but the consequence of unbelief.

And became heir of the righteousness &c.] He was accounted righteous and preserved because of his faith. The privilege of justification by faith was thus shewn to those who would dwell on hereditary claims, to belong to the whole human race by virtue of descent from Noah.

^s The instances hitherto given are only introductory to the true subject of the chapter which commences here,—the terms on which the land of Judea was assigned to Abraham, and the spirit in which he received it. The promise made to Abraham when he was called from his own country was, that he should be forefather to a great nation, and a source of blessing to the whole earth. This only implied that he was to be an instrument in God's hands for the good of others, and his faith consisted in his placing himself unreservedly at God's disposal for this purpose. What God virtually promised was an entrance for himself, and through him for unborn millions into that which in the N. T. is described as the kingdom of heaven, a reign of righteousness that was to commence and increase in time, and have its consummation in eternity. Its local and

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise :

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

temporal aspect was represented to Abraham by the land of Canaan, and the prospect and possession of it in its earthly stages was conditioned by its spiritual meaning. The spiritual fulfilment was to be the outgrowth and perfection of the earthly possession, and the earthly possession must be tempered by the nature of the spiritual fulfilment. The faith of Abraham lay in his entering readily and willingly into this plan. He obeyed God in setting forth for a place which he was to possess at some future time, and without understanding whither he was going. He knew neither the when nor the where of his reward. God required him to do a certain work, and he was content that his own personal fortunes on earth should be whatever conduced to its accomplishment.

⁹ The land in which Abraham was placed was emphatically the land of the promise: not the land whose possession was to be the final fulfilment of the promise, but the land which was to be the channel through which the thing promised, something very different from itself, was to be arrived at. If Abraham had been without faith, he would have exhausted God's purpose on his own ownership of Canaan, as the later Jews did; but having faith in God's declaration of a universal blessedness in the future, and merging his own interests in that, he sojourned in Canaan as in a land not his own, and dwelt in tents, as also did Isaac and Jacob, who regarded the promise in the same light.

¹⁰ The reason why Abraham considered himself only a

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable,

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and

traveller through the land of Canaan, and not a settler in it, was that his expectation was set on some more solid and permanent abode than earth can give. It is not necessary to suppose that he had a clear and distinct hope of a heavenly city. From the nature of God's communication with him, he gathered that there is an eternal recompense for those who obey God's will, and that to fix his home amid the shifting scenes of earth, would be to hinder the will of God, and surrender the substance for the shadow, the haven of safety for the tossings of the sea.

¹¹ Even Sarah, who at first disbelieved, afterwards in consequence of her faith received power in her old age to found a race of descendants. The sense in which *καταβολή* and *σπίρμα* are so frequently used in the sacred writings, suggest themselves at once as affording the most obvious interpretation of this passage. As to the more technical meaning we can more easily believe that the writer was ignorant of it, than that, knowing it, he could have so strangely misapplied it. Sarah's doubt was concerning herself: her faith was in Him who made the promise.

¹³ Those first fathers of a countless race all felt that their

were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

share of earth had not been given them in full quittance of God's intentions towards them, that the special nature of its bestowal was in fact intended to raise them above the common level, and enable them to see into the future. They did not consume in self-indulgence what had been committed to them in trust, and so they lived in faith, and died with their hope virgin and unstained. They furnish the standard instance of how the highest duty is performed to self and posterity at the same time; how to regard our essential interests is to provide safely for remote descendants; and how to live mindful of coming ages is to elevate and establish our own souls. This is at once true faith and genuine patriotism, to transmit a country unimpoverished by selfish accumulation and excess. They did not appropriate the subject of the promises to themselves, but saw them afar off. They who believe and make that belief the guidance of their way, that blessedness is to overspread the earth through their agency, are keeping life's direst foes from their own doors by their fidelity to their unselfish aim. As the good farmer will not exhaust the land to fill his own stores, that is, as he does not treat it absolutely as if it were his own, but is contented to live on it as a stranger and a sojourner, so the true fathers of a nation will not enrich and enjoy themselves, as if the nation were their own, at the cost of entailing pauperism and degradation on those who are to follow them. This was the lesson which the example of the patriarchs held out to the Jews in the latter days. Selfish pride and ambition are short-sighted. Vain and sensual men cannot see afar off. The promises are an offence to them. They kill the heir that the inheritance may be theirs, to dispose of as they please. Matt. xxi. 38. They sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage, and prefer the fatness of the earth

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

to the blessing of the blessed. A time when all men shall know God, and live at peace with each other is hidden from them by thick mists and darkness. But faith simply means ability to see. As in the endless plains of the East a party of travellers may appear almost close to the eye, and yet the night may fall before they are actually met with; so in faith's clear atmosphere the event of thousands of years hence is seen, and spoken of, and acted upon, as if it were to be the event of to-morrow.

¹⁴ By not being engrossed with what they might think their present rights, as if they were their all, they made it manifest that they were seeking, not possessing, a country, and this is faith, a persuasion of things not seen.

¹⁵ What country were they seeking? Not the land of their fathers from which they had come forth, for to that they might return.

¹⁶ Therefore the country they seek is a heavenly one. It is not said that the patriarchs were acting the part described with the recognised and declared view of gaining heaven, but that the course they pursued was a virtual, if even an unconscious seeking of heaven. God, therefore, recognised them as His children. They were living subjects of His kingdom,

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

and He called Himself their God, and prepared a city for them. See ver. 10.

¹⁷⁻¹⁹ The special act of faith ascribed here to Abraham is that he was ready to offer up Isaac in the assurance that God could restore him again, although he had never seen any one raised from the dead. This incident in the patriarch's history is given by St. James (ii. 21), as an instance of conduct that proved the strength and fulness of faith. The willingness to slay Isaac amounted to an act in intention. As such God received it, and His prevention of the final performance of it was a restoring of Isaac to his father in a figure, for the father had already lost him in purpose and resignation. It is to be remembered that God did not mean the deed to be done, and that he expressly interfered to hinder the performance of it. The suggestion of it was an ultimate trial of Abraham's faith, and his resolute acquiescence in the idea will always be quoted as an instance of unquestioning and practical trust in God regarded solely in His attribute of omnipotence. But God may also be regarded in His attribute of righteousness. Abraham, on another occasion, appealed to this attribute from the attribute of mere power. (Gen. xviii. 23-33.) 'That be far from Thee to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked that be far from Thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' This remon-

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

strance could not be cited as a proof of faith considered as a persuasion of the unseen as in the text, nor of faith evidenced by its acts, as in St. James; but it undoubtedly is, more particularly in the light which Christ has cast on the Divine government, a higher reaching unto, and a closer and truer reflection of the Divine character than any other which the sacred record presents (comp. Jonah iv. 9, 10). That Abraham, when commanded to slay his son, trampled on his moral convictions, and would have sacrificed the life of another as a proof of his own devotion, was not an act of homage which God would accept. The patriarch, it is commonly said, proved his submission by surrendering the dearest thing that he had. But the dearest thing which Abraham had was not, as the event taught him, his son, but his sense of righteousness. God never meant that he should surrender this. The bearing of this event in Abraham's history has been misunderstood solely in consequence of a comparison or parallel having been drawn between it and the act of God in sending His Son to die for the world, for which comparison or parallel neither the sacred Scriptures, nor the circumstances of the cases, afford the slightest shadow of ground. The two cases are wholly dissimilar in every essential particular.

²⁰ The faith of Isaac was not concerned with his own personal affection for his two living sons, but with the remote events which he predicted concerning their descendants. The substance of his blessing was conceived in faith, although human guile might interfere with the channels in which it was to run, substituting one for the other.

²¹ This is a different case. Jacob blessed each of the sons of

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Joseph discriminatingly. The futurity of the events referred to was equally the object of faith in both cases, but this futurity is specified in the case of Isaac, because his faith was confined to that.

And worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff] When Jacob had pronounced the blessing he invoked the Divine sanction on it by a solemn gesture of reverence. An act of reverential prostration or obeisance was equivalent to saying Amen at the end of a prayer. See Exod. iv. 31; xii. 27. The usual expression is to worship towards the earth (Gen. xviii. 2; xix. 1; xxiv. 52); but a very old person would only bow down his head towards the top of the staff which supported him, instead of towards the earth. So when the servants of David in his old age uttered a prayer for the prosperity of Solomon's reign, 'the king bowed himself upon the bed' (1 Kings i. 47). He joined in the prayer, and asked God to grant it by prostrating himself on or bowing towards the bed or couch on which he was reclining.

²² The fortunate courtier life of Joseph is deficient in those acts of surrender of the seen for the unseen, which are required for the illustration of the writer's present purpose, which is to reconcile the Hebrews to the extinction of their nation, in its secular aspect. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had no national pride or ambition. The career of Joseph in Egypt, and the settlement in consequence of his family there, changed the habits and tastes of the people. Henceforward the re-possession of Canaan was to them the fulfilment of all God's intention. They returned under Moses no longer as strangers and sojourners, but as invaders, intent on appropriating the soil; and soon after its acquisition they became an ordinary earthly nation, thinking only of present glory and success, and losing

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child ; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

sight of the promise. 1 Sam. viii. 5. The descent into Egypt occasioned by Joseph's acceptance of his lot of brilliant prosperity necessarily led to the obtaining of the land of Canaan by conquest. When dying he remembered that his people must return to their own land, and he commanded that his bones should be removed with them. This was the most signal instance of his persuasion of the unseen future that the life of Joseph offers.

²³ 'The Hebrews in Egypt 'multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty.' During the long years of ease and prosperity no heroic believer in a distant reign of God was found among them. Only when a king arose who knew not Joseph did the spirit of the nation reassert itself. The beauty of Moses awakened the faith of his parents. They refused to deprive themselves and the world of a child of so fair a promise. Thus hope in the child's future lot was stronger than their fear of the king's command to destroy him. Their faith was a determination to secure what they hoped for.

²⁴⁻²⁶ Moses furnished a most appropriate example for the

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

writer's subject. He resigned worldly grandeur, and chose in preference the despised and persecuted lot of those who work out their perfection by labouring for the kingdom of God, and for the good of mankind. He descended from a high position that he might voluntarily endure sufferings identical in kind with those which the Hebrews were exhorted to suffer patiently, namely, the reproach of Christ. The sufferings and contempt imposed on all men who have faith and hope in the purpose of God and the destinies of the human race are the same in all dispensations. The reproach of Christ is the contumely and the hatred directed against him who chooses to be a sojourner on the earth in the midst of the multitudes who make it their home.

For he had respect unto the recompence of reward] This does not mean that Moses was determined in his choice by the preponderance of a definite future reward; it explains the preceding expression, 'the reproach of Christ,' and implies that he was fully conscious of all that he must undergo in consequence of the choice which he made. . He preferred the reproach of Christ to the treasure of Egypt, for, it is added in explanation, he saw distinctly the kind of recompense that awaited him on earth, ingratitude, opposition, and only a remote vision of the promised land.

²⁷ By forsaking Egypt is not meant the actual final departure from the country, but that departure with the whole course of previous conduct that resulted in it. Moses, fearless of the king's anger and continued resistance, persisted in his resolution to lead his people from Egypt until he overcame every obstacle.

For he endured as seeing him, &c.] He was supported in his long contest with the king by his trust in the invisible God.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

²⁸ The events here alluded to are part of the line of action which compelled the king to consent to the departure of the Israelites. The chronological order is, therefore, not violated. Moses celebrated the passover, which was to be attended with such fatal consequences to the Egyptians, in faith that the requisite precautions would preserve his own people from the destroyer's touch.

³⁰ This is the single instance selected from the whole conquest of Canaan that suits the train of thought which the writer pursues, and the principle which he endeavours to inculcate. Jericho alone was taken, not by the ordinary processes of warfare, but by an effort of faith.

³¹ In the transaction referred to the Jews are not regarded as a nation fighting against a rival nation, but as a people, under God's special protection, contending against evil. The writer demands from the Jews of his day conduct towards the Christians similar to that of Rahab towards the Jews of old. She did not allow any narrow national predilection or prejudice to darken her sense of what was due to God, and God's righteous servants.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise :

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

³⁹ *Received not the promise*] Did not grasp the immature promise ; did not seize on the inheritance to make it their own ; did not satisfy their immortal longings with a temporal possession, but died in the faith that God had something better to bestow. To a people who cast yearning glances towards the past greatness of their country, and indulged in brilliant dreams of the future, the writer describes who had been the true heroes of the Jewish race. A light of judgment falls from heaven on the pages of Jewish history, and dooming all the rest to darkness, singles out by its illumination a few hunted, homeless men as models of what the Christian soldier should aspire to be. But there is no inherent necessity why Christians should be of all men most miserable. Persecution is the accident of the early conflicts of Christianity with the world.

⁴⁰ They did not fulfil the promise to themselves in a worldly sense ; and the reason was, that God had a further revelation to make concerning it in later days, which they foresaw by faith, and waited for to the end that we might be all perfected together. The patriarchs and prophets had a presentiment that the earthly fulfilment of the promise would only bring its spiritual character more fully to light. The future kingdom of God on earth therefore was not the final object of their faith, nor was the hope of it the immediate instrument of their perfection, but the unseen and heavenly kingdom of which the earthly one was the germ and shadow. Thus they and we are perfected together. They died with an unslaked hope, desiring a better country, which was afterwards revealed to us ; and so entering eternity with souls expectant and receptive, not clogged by a material gratification of their desires, they

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3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him :

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

³ The meaning of looking unto Jesus is explained. When the Hebrews felt discouraged at the hostility that met them on every side and were ready to yield before it, they must compare it with the opposition that Jesus encountered.

⁴ The true meaning of their liability to weariness and depression is assigned. Sin was still a traitor in the camp, counselling submission and inspiring despair. In their contest against sin they had not resisted unto death. They had not yet fully realised the death of Christ, and their own death with Him, and, in consequence, sin still remained, and was a source of despondency and weakness. See ix. 16.

⁵ And as the result of the incompleteness of your victory you have quite forgotten the exhortation which God addresses to you as to His children ; not having fully identified themselves with the death of Christ, they failed to appropriate the comfort and privileges of sons of God.

⁶⁻⁸ The sons of God alone understand the mystery of suffering, and are thereby enabled to bear it patiently and thankfully. The sorrows that wait upon virtue are foreign and unnatural

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

to it. They arise from a twofold source—the opposition of our own selfish nature and the enmity of the outer world. He who undertakes the subjugation of his baser nature will have to endure a bitter conflict, and he who endeavours to teach the world either by his precepts or his life, will make it his foe. But strength, and knowledge, and perfection are attained in the struggle; and, as we are called to it by God, it is described as His discipline. If we feel ourselves sinking under it we should recollect that it is a mark of God's call and love, and of true sonship, and thus acquire courage.

* The earthly father chastises his child that he may fear him; the Heavenly Father chastises that His child may live.

¹⁰ In the one case only a temporal purpose is aimed at, and without any certainty that the means are wisely applied. In their nature God's chastisements are for our advantage, because they bring us nearer to Him. When the sea is unruffled the reflection of the sun in it seems deep in the water, solitary and unapproachable as the luminary in the heavens. But when it

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees ;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way ; but let it rather be healed.

is agitated by the breeze the image floats to the surface and trembles in broken familiar splendour to our feet. The sorrows of life are necessary to catch the rays of God's mercy, and to gild our pathway to heaven across the ocean of time.

¹¹ This conflict or discipline is grievous while it lasts, but it will be followed by peace, and we shall then find that we have won the prize of righteousness. While the flesh and the world oppose and persecute, we are conscious only of the pain we endure ; but, when the strife is over, we shall ascertain that, during its continuance, we were growing stronger, and truer, and braver.

¹² But if this be so, we must already be gainers by the trials we have undergone. We are stronger than we deem. Our hearts are not really desponding, our faculties are not unstrung. We are able to grasp the sword, and advance against the enemy. Strength has been given to us before it was said, 'Stretch forth thine hand.'

¹³ Pursue a consistent course of righteousness, and, the longer you walk in it, the easier it will become for you ; and those who are weak and ignorant will be taught and strengthened by your example. God's highway is made of acts of righteousness, and every righteous act helps to make

14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord :

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled ;

it straighter and easier for the footsore wanderer. A solitary step in the right direction may be the beginning of a path.

¹⁴ Peace with all men is the aim of the Christian warfare, and it is well to keep this in view lest we learn to strive for the sake of strife. Seasons of controversy and persecution have their peculiar dangers. Hatred is engendered instead of love, and suffering is accepted as a substitute for holiness. A controversialist or a persecuted man may be worldly and impure. There is no spontaneous or mechanical growth in the Christian life. We must keep the end consciously in view.

Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord] Comp. ix. 28 ; Matt. v. 8 ; Acts xxvi. 16. Impurity of any kind prevents the heart from seeing God, and whatever prevents from seeing Him is impurity. Love of the world in any form, of its good opinion, or of its grossest pleasures, will obstruct the spiritual vision, just as a particle of any kind of matter that falls into the natural eye will hinder it from seeing.

¹⁵ Carefully guarding lest there be any one who degrades the favour of God by seeking lesser blessings than He proposes to give ; who interprets the promises temporally. One person of this description in a primitive Christian community would be a source of universal discontent and bitterness. While all were in the enjoyment of spiritual blessings and undergoing common sufferings, there would be no room for envy ; but when some members abused their religious privileges for secular ends, and appeared as successful worshippers of God and mammon at once, the whole society was corrupted and disturbed. A new goal is erected, and Christians enter on a race against each other for worldly honours and emoluments.

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected : for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

¹⁶ Two forms of the corrupting influence referred to are specified—sensuality and profanity. It is of course implied that both may coexist with a profession of the gospel. By a profane person is meant one of low secular tastes, devoid of heavenly aspirations, and unable to see the sanctity of the Christian calling, which he is in consequence ready to prostitute for worldly purposes. Esau who sold his birthright for a single meal is an example. The glory of having a share in working out God's plan could not compete in his mind with an immediate gratification of appetite. Persons of this character might be admitted into the early church inadvertently, or with the hope that a better mind would be gradually formed in them. But, quite apart from the question, whether they are capable of salvation, the writer's object is to impress on the Hebrews that, in their present condition, they are unworthy of a place in the Christian church, are certain to disappoint any expectations that may be formed of their amendment, and will only put a stumbling-block in the way of others by their worldly aims and lives.

¹⁷ The histories of all such persons may be illustrated by that of Esau. His secular spirit, and the unfitness he displayed to take any part in promoting the reign of God among men, remained unchanged to the last. He sold his birthright, and afterwards when, notwithstanding having done so, he desired to inherit the blessing, he necessarily failed, because,

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

though he sought it with tears, he never repented of his indifference in parting with the spiritual distinction which he inherited. He sought the blessing without being able to see that his own earthly mindedness stood in the way of his obtaining it. He desired to be blessed, but did not discern the need of previous reformation.

Found no place for repentance] Saw no occasion for change of disposition. Comp. note on viii. 7.

¹⁸ The necessity for a closer discrimination in membership and motives is shewn by distinctly bringing to their minds, that they are no longer Jews but Christians; that a system represented by elemental terrors and the brute forces of nature has passed away, and a new one of Divine love and saintly communion has begun.

The mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire] A mountain touched with fire and burning. Archbishop Trench (Synon. of N.T.) is of opinion that *ψηλαφῆν* has not the meaning of modifying by touch. But it may be questioned whether this is universally true. See Plut. Mor. i. 302 (Tauchn).

²¹ Deut. ix. 19.

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

22. 23 Ye are come not to the material Sion, but to the spiritual; not to angels in the form of fire and tempest, but to a festal host of angels; not to the enrolled assembly (Numb. iii. 40) with many judges (Exod. xviii. 25-27), but to an assembly enrolled in heaven—living believers whose names are written in God's book—and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,—the faithful dead of all ages.

24 The preceding particulars do not include a comparison between the two covenants in their sacrificial aspects. This point of contrast sums up the enumeration. In addition to all we come to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaks more powerfully than Abel. See xi. 4. Abel's sacrifice *typified* his own death by sin, and was the same in character as the sacrifices of the law. The sacrifice of Christ *is* in value and efficiency our death by sin if we be believers.

The blood of sprinkling] A sacrificial phrase meaning, when spiritually interpreted, the advantages obtainable by the death of Christ. We are come to a covenant which offers us a settlement of our past sins and Divine assistance for the future through Christ's sacrifice. The sprinkling of blood in the

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

Temple service meant the rendering of a life as the penalty for sin. There is no sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, but the expression is used for the spiritual application to us of the consequences of His death, namely the discharge of the debt which we owed because of our sins.

That speaketh better things than that of Abel] That speaketh more powerful things than Abel. The sacrifice which Abel offered, by which he still spoke in the Jewish system of sacrifice, could not really discharge the debt of sin, and liberate the conscience, as the sacrifice of Christ does.

²⁵ The point of the argument contained in the preceding comparison is here enforced. God formerly spoke on earth, He now speaks from heaven. He formerly spoke to the ear, He now speaks to the heart and spirit. The clearer, distincter communication must impose a more onerous responsibility. Luke xii. 48. In proportion as man's moral faculties are enlightened and his spiritual sensibilities quickened by immediate intercourse with heaven, the withdrawal of the Divine presence must be a more inevitable and a severer punishment.

²⁶ Whose voice then made an earthly revolution. God introduced a new principle of earthly government, and an era in history. But concerning the present time He has promised to revolutionise heaven and earth. The whole Jewish system of sacrifice with its heavenly prototype (see viii. 5; ix. 23) has passed away, and a pure reign of truth and righteousness has commenced.

27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may

²⁷ The expression 'once more' implies a state of fixity and permanence after the proposed change. It was to be a final revolution. 'Once more' only was God about to alter the mode of revealing His will. The Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, was to be removed, and the kingdom of heaven would then be established for ever.

As of things that are made] All the modes and figures by which God's will is expressed, are temporary. His will alone is uncreated and eternal.

²⁸ Since we have come into possession of this immutable reign of righteousness let us have, or hold, the favour of God in such a manner as to serve Him acceptably with reverence and fear. The favour of God is a state of reconciliation to Him and admission to His service, but does not exclude the possibility of transgressing His laws and incurring His displeasure.

²⁹ A reflection distinct from the line of thought introduced at ver. 18, but confirmatory of the conclusion it enforces, is added. The pure in heart see God in His purity and fostering kindness; but to him whose spirit is stained by the flesh, He appears as He appeared to the Jews of old. However terrible the attribute here assigned to God may be, and however it may revolt our modern pantheistic associations, very little consideration will satisfy us that it would be impossible to imagine a beneficent personal ruler of the universe, or even sovereign law, without it. Who that hates evil could love or reverence a God who was not a hater of it, whose very Being and Essence

serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

were not at irreconcilable war with it? There is sin which is not weakness, or infirmity, or error, or ignorance, but conscious tyranny and usurpation; which thrives and has its cruel satisfaction only in the misery, inferiority, and degradation of men and the dishonour of God. From this sin we are none of us wholly free. The consciousness that God is a consuming fire to it, is its destruction. The revelation is made to us in love not in wrath, to make us sharers of this character, not sufferers from it. Is it not well for us to know, if we are struggling against selfishness, that the good that is in us, the good that comes from God, has the essence and energy of God, and is a vivid force of fire that will consume to dead ashes all that weakens and torments us, if we only give it air, and let it do its work? It is only the false and the bad in us that shrinks from this knowledge, and shall we permit this shrinking to pass for the expression of our true feelings? In proportion as we draw nearer to God and are exposed to the more immediate action of His wrath against sin, He will seem to us milder, and more merciful, and more holy. Modern sentiment seeks to screen God from the imputation of punishing the apostate by describing his punishment as essential and self-incurred. This no doubt is in a degree true, but there is infinite despair in the idea when carried to its full extent. It is better to acknowledge God as our Judge and the Awarder of our punishment, than to conceive Him viewing the irreversible doom of the lost sinner as something that has travelled beyond the realm of His power. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of a God who is a consuming fire, but it is better than to fall into our own hands, and be at our own mercy. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

CHAPTER XIII.

LET brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed

XIII. ¹ The writer resumes the line of exhortation commenced in xii. 14. The necessity of holiness and the absolute incompatibility of unholiness in the form of licentiousness or worldliness with the nature of the Christian dispensation and the character of God, is the subject of the intervening verses. 'Follow peace with all men,'—'Let brotherly love continue,' are the two rules of life within which is contained the record of what is required in our intercourse with God.

² The reason assigned for the practice of hospitality makes it a virtue for all time. When we shew kindness to a stranger we may be unconsciously speeding some mission of heaven, or perhaps awakening an angelic response in a breast soured and irritated by isolation and neglect. The worldly maxim is, think ill of all men till you know them to be good. The Divine maxim bids us think it possible that the unknown person is an angel.

³ Genuine sympathy is here described. Think of and assist prisoners and sufferers for Christ's sake as persons in whose offence you share, and whose place you are ready to take.

⁴ *Marriage is honourable in all*] Let marriage be honourable in all things.

undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be

⁵ *Conversation*] τρόπος. Course of life. Turn of character.

⁶ *I will not fear what man shall do unto me*] I will not fear. What shall man do unto me? He may slander, beggar, kill me. But what is that?

⁷ Remember your leaders who have spoken unto you the word of God, and imitate their faith, keeping before your minds the termination to which their conduct led. Imitate them knowing that they died for the faith.

Conversation] ἀναστροφῆς. The word 'conversance' might be adopted to supply the void which the special application of 'conversation' has left.

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day &c.

⁹ Do not be carried away with subtle and strange doctrines. For it is well that we should aim at fixing the truth in our

established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

hearts by constantly dwelling in the light and warmth of God's love, and not by the eating of meats offered in sacrifices which has been proved to be unprofitable to those who have practised it. The allusion is to the Jewish notion that they could keep themselves within the covenant by the mere formal eating of things offered to God. Converts from Judaism to Christianity who still believed in the validity of the sacrifices of the law would be very likely to continue this practice.

¹⁰ *We have an altar &c]* We have not an altar from which they who minister in the tabernacle have a right to eat. The stress is on the negation. So, 'Provide yourselves with bags which wax not old,' Luke xii. 33, means, 'Do not provide yourselves with bags which grow old.' Comp. John iv. 32; Col. ii. 11.

Which serve the tabernacle] 'Altar' and 'tabernacle' are terms of Jewish worship which have no material counterparts in the Christian religion. They are to be interpreted spiritually as always in this epistle. 'Altar,' if we give it a precise meaning (which is not necessary because it is denied not affirmed in the text), represents the throne of God; 'tabernacle' the whole region of Christian obedience. 'Those who serve the tabernacle,' stands for 'Christians.' See 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. We Christians have no altar from which we have a right to eat.

¹¹ Because the sacrifices which are typical of that of Christ are not eaten, but burnt without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

¹² In fulfilment of which type Christ suffered without the gate that He might sanctify the people through His death. 'His own blood' is opposed to the sacrifices of beasts, and excludes the idea of sanctification by partaking of such sacrifices. We are pardoned by dying with Christ, and our sanctification is carried on by the perpetual efficacy of His death.

¹³ If then we desire to resemble Christ let us strive to appropriate His death, not by partaking of sacrificial meats, but by a life conformed to His death. Let us be strangers and pilgrims on earth as the patriarchs were, and bear the reproach of Christ as Moses bore it. xi. 26.

¹⁴ The writer prepares his readers for the total subversion of the Jewish state which was so soon to take place, and teaches them to turn it to the right account. By a perverse patriotism that was in reality a sordid and concentrated worldliness, the Jewish nation had lost its humanity in the name of law, and its religion in the glory of Judea. The hand of God was about to shatter the idol, but God's voice is first raised to warn the Christian church in all ages against a similar idolatry. The patriarchs who received the promised land as the shadow of a substance that was in heaven, the prophets who lived in passionate protest against the superstition that degraded the Lord of the universe into the God of a district, and the mission that was meant for the blessing of mankind into the usurpation of a caste, the heroes who would have made their country the

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

instrument of divine wisdom, and not the pretext of human pride, are successively quoted to give point to the pregnant sentence, 'we have no continuing city.' It is impossible not to notice the fitness that exists between the whole line of thought in this epistle and the historical events that were on the eve of fulfilment. The Jewish nation had made its choice. It had rejected its Messiah, and was now threatening the Christian faith with the contagion of its formalism and its worldliness. The danger was to be averted by a shock that would loosen the dense cohesion of the people, and awaken them to their individual responsibilities and capacities for truth. As the energy of motion is transformed into heat—is transferred from the mass to the molecules, in a body whose rapid flight has been suddenly arrested—so the fierce, unscrupulous, brutal nationality of the Jewish race was about to be transformed into separate consciousness and individual zeal by the dismemberment of Judea and the destruction of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ There are feelings and thoughts whose chief worth is in the comfort and encouragement they bring to the mind. They are the rewards of virtuous conduct. They are prolonged by imparting them, and they are a testimony to the fulness of our content. To these we may give utterance, and crop them like superfluous blossoms from the field. But in general our graver, deeper thoughts are linked with motives and noble purposes, and are springs of mighty action, and should not be rashly shown to the crowd. They are flowers that promise fruit, and the fulfilment of the promise depends on their union with the parent stem. God meant their beauty and their fragrance for us, their fruit for the world. Yet to profess Christ in dark and perilous times is fruit, though 'of the lips.'

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief : for that is unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us : for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

¹⁶ But practice must not be forgotten in profession ; works in words. There is a temptation, and a tendency to be guarded against in all lip service.

¹⁷ The claims which their teachers or guides had over them was that of men faithfully watching over their charge, and accountable to God for their fidelity. They must meet their efforts by ready submission. If the teacher's work be carried on amid discouragements, without any response that will enable him to rejoice in his success, it will be unprofitable. The sense of failure will paralyse his efforts.

¹⁸ The connection seems to be,—‘Pray for us, because we are persuaded that the troubles in which we are involved have come upon us in the honest pursuit of duty.’

²⁰ Jesus became the great Shepherd of mankind by His death.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

¶ Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.

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